BEN KLASSEN

Against The Evil Tide

An Autobiography

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Against the Evil Tide

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Prologue

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All my life, from the day I was born to the present. It seems that, stubbornly and against overwhelming odds, I have been bucking the current tide of history. In one way or another, consciously or subconsciously, my entire life has been dedicated towards fighting against those evil and powerful forces that now hold the world in their tyrannical grip. I have been waging war against these evil forces intermittently and spasmodically perhaps, in the beginning not even recognizing what those malignant destroyers were doing, or who the real evildoers were. But my struggle has been persistent and tenacious. Furthermore, as time went on, the picture became more clearly focused, the tyrannical destroyers more specifically identified, and the complex solution to the puzzle more nearly solved.

But my struggle was, and is, not only one of doing battle AGAINST the evil tide. There Is also a very POSITIVE side to this picture, and that is what I am and have been fighting FOR. The answer to that is clearly delineated in the several books I have written and can be summed up in a few words - namely, the SURVIVAL, EXPANSION AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE WHITE RACE. In our racial religion, CREATIVITY, I strongly believe, we have the Total Program, the Final Solution, the Ultimate Creed.

* * * * *

This Is the true story of a Mennonite boy who was born in the midst of the Communist revolution in the Russian Ukraine. At nine months, while the Red and the White armies were waging civil war In his native village of Rudnerweide, he suffered a severe siege of typhoid fever and nearly died. Nevertheless, he survived the disease, he survived the anarchy and terror of revolution and the two years of famine that followed. When he was six, he and his family fled Russia to try to start life anew in the wide-open wilds of the Mexico ranch country. Shortly thereafter they moved to the wheat farming country of Saskatchewan, Canada, where he grew to adulthood. In 1945 he moved to the United States, where after a long and checkered career, he finally found his life's purpose structuring and establishing a racial religion for the survival, expansion and advancement of his own racial kinsman Nature s Finest.

I was that boy. After seven decades I can say that it has been a long and circuitous Odyssey, and I thank Fate that she has allotted me sufficient time to reflect on the ensuing course of events that permitted me to finally consummate the paramount mission of my life, and propel it into perpetuity.

* * * * *

By any yardstick, the White Race is the most creative, productive and intelligent creature Mother Nature has produced In the 2.3 billion years that it is claimed lift has existed on this planet Earth. Strangely, however Nature's Finest in the last half century has become a highly endangered species, whose demise and extinction is at most only a few generations away. This is almost a certainty unless this unique species drastically changes course, and does so promptly and most forcefully. What the White Race has direly needed in the last 6,000 years of its civilization is a racial religion of its own a racial religion whose overriding fervor was, and constantly remained, the survival, expansion and advancement of its own kind. This is not a novel idea Nature has Implanted this Innate drive In every other creature alive, but strangely, in its long and tumultuous history, the White Race has never fully grasped this idea While eagerly pursuing the advancement of science and high technology, at the same time It has stupidly and tragically utilized Its vastly superior endowments to kill, decimate and destroy its own kind.

Now the White Race has a racial religion of its own and we call it CREATIVITY. I have faith that It will provide the spark that will kindle the conflagration of a vast worldwide movement of religious fervor - the first real constructive revolution in history to really accrue to the benefit of the human race. If enough of my fellow kinsmen will grasp that realization, the redemption and salvation of Nature's Finest will be assured. For this I have labored and it is my fervent hope and prayer that it will come to pass in this next generation.

As the founder of a new religion, I feel an obligation not only to my White Racial Comrades but also to posterity - and even to my enemies - to permanently set down the events of my life, detailing my origins, my thoughts and my objectives. I believe that having come this far it might perhaps be incumbent for the future that I do so.

I say perhaps. There are two ways of looking at It - two possibilities. If the White Race falls to rise up and accept the challenge and if the Jewish pestilence succeeds in their age-old frenzy of mongrelizing and/or exterminating the White Race from the face of this Planet Earth, then all my writings and my other efforts and sacrifices will be in vain. Creativity and its whole network of ideas will be flushed down the memory hole of history. In such case, it will matter little as to what I did or what I wrote. In fact, as far as I am concerned, nothing will really matter anymore, should the White Race be destroyed.

If, on the other hand, the White Race rises up in wrathful vengeance, mobilizes its awesome power, and smashes the Jewish tyranny into oblivion, then I feel certain that Creativity will have played a major part in giving inspiration, goal and direction in freeing the White Race from the tentacles of Jewish tyranny. When that comes to pass then there will be a major demand for endless details regarding Creativity's early beginnings, as well as the life of the Founder, and many details will be such that only I would have knowledge of them and they would be a vital source of basic Information. Fortunately, fate has spared me the time that I may write my memoirs without any undue pressure from either financial worries or from political duress. Unfortunately, too many of our racial warriors who have contributed significantly to the cause have been denied this opportunity, and the only source material (highly fabricated) about them comes from the lips and pens of our racial enemies - traitors and Jews. As a result, our racial fighters have been slandered, calumnied and lied about before and after their death with little authoritative refutation from the White racial side. Adolf Hitler is a prime example of such distortions and calumnies, but there are any number of others.

Every person born is a composite of their cultural heritage and the genetic inheritance of their ancestors. Of all these factors, genes are of major importance, and this is something only our ancestors can hand down to us. The innate character of each individual is then further shaped and molded for better or for worse by the multitude of events that swirl about them during the tenure of their life. Some are crushed by events, while others overcome events and remain masters of their own destiny. In any event, all are the sum total of their heritage, whether it be cultural, genetic, or any one of a number of other variables.

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Milestone Zero: My Mennonite Heritage

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Heritage is an important word to me. Although I personally never joined the Mennonite Church (I will explain this later), nevertheless, I am extremely proud of my ancestors and my Mennonite heritage. Both have been most generous, and I am thankful. All of us owe everything we are to our ancestors - our culture, our civilization, our very genes and life itself. But it does not end there with merely a thank you note. We have a grave responsibility, yes, a sacred obligation to carry that precious heritage on to future generations, and in so doing not only preserve and expand that which is best, but also to strive to upgrade those genetic qualities to ever higher levels as we bequeath our genes and heritage to each succeeding generation.

My ancestors for the last four hundred and fifty years have been Mennonites. Although the term Mennonite is a religious designation, actually the Mennonites are also a special group of ethnic people who are unique unto themselves. Now scattered all over the world, they nevertheless have maintained a certain cohesiveness that goes beyond their religious bond, beyond nationality and country of residence. Now, after four hundred and fifty years, they have a unique history and heritage that is peculiarly their very own. I am proud to be part of it, and I want to relate some of the mileposts of that ethnic history.

I was born on February 7, 1918, according to the inscription In the big old family Bible. I managed to retrieve this old book as a valuable archive from my older sister just very recently. The book is at least eighty or ninety years old, and I treasure it highly, not because of its contents, but because it is an heirloom that has inscribed in it some of the important mileposts of my family, including my birth date. The February 7 date, however, represents the dates according to the Julian calendar then in use in Russia and is actually 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar that we now use. So my actual birth date is February 20. The place was in the Klassen family home in the Mennonite village of Rudnerweide. This village was part of the Molotschna colony of Mennonites, located along a river of the same name in the Russian province of Taurlda. This thriving colony was located in the southern Ukraine just north of the Sea of Azov.

The Mennonite colony known as the Molotschna consisted of a homogeneous group of German speaking people, about 22,000 in number (by 1910), living in approximately 60 villages and hamlets, although a few could be considered of town or even city status. I will have more to say about the Molotschna colony later.

Actually, we spoke two languages, Low German (Plattdeutsch or Plautdietsch), and High German. We spoke a colloquial Plautdietsch in our ordinary, everyday conversation, a language that I now look upon as being rather colorful and uniquely expressive. However, in church and in school High German, the language traditionally used in Germany, was the standard fare. All books, correspondence, sermons delivered in church, hymns, etc., were in High German. No dictionary or grammar was ever compiled for the popularly used Plautdietsch. It was an arrangement we then took for granted, but looking back on it now after all these years I find this dual language arrangement as a rather strange and superfluous phenomenon, and wonder what purpose, if any, it served.

My ancestors (as Mennonites) originated in either Holland and/or the Danzig area of Prussia. Approximately 450 years ago in the year 1536 while the Protestant revolution was in full turmoil, a Catholic priest by the name of Menno Simons branched off into a Protestant sect of his own. His followers were called Mennonites. With the turmoil and persecution that was then rampant, the Mennonites dispersed into many countries, such as Switzerland, France, Prussia, and several others. The Mennonites have been dispersing and emigrating ever since. In fact, I guess I am an emigrated emigrant myself, several times over.

When we study historical movements, whether they be religious, political, cultural or whatever, we find that seldom do such movements originate from out of a vacuum. On the contrary, we usually find that each movement has its roots in some similar previous movement. It then branches off from its parent movement not unlike a rebellious child from its former family.

And so it is with the Mennonite religion. Tracing back its origins, we find that it is an offshoot of the Anabaptists, who in turn emerged from out of the melee of the Protestant Reformation during the turbulent Sixteenth Century. Protestantism, as we all know, is a Christian religion that broke away from the Catholic church which had then been in existence for some fifteen centuries. Without the Catholic church there would undoubtedly have been no Christianity with its present plethora of thousands of sects and cults. (As a passing observation, I have found that the definition of a "cult" is a matter of biased opinion - one man's religion is another man's cult and vice versa.) Pursuing origins and branches further back into history, we find that Catholicism and Christianity have their roots in still earlier Judaism, the Jews' intransigent religion. Three-quarters of the Christian bible, the Old Testament, is really a compilation of fabricated Jewish history and folklore. Going back even further, we find that the Jews pirated practically every concept in their religion, the idea of soul, eternal life, the hereafter, baptism, circumcision, and a dozen other ideas from the Ancient Egyptians. (See Page 200, "Building a Whiter and Brighter World".) We could explore further the origins of the religious ideas of the Egyptians, but I believe we have gone back far enough to make a point.

The Anabaptists

I believe at this point it behooves us to look into the beginnings of the Mennonite movement by first reviewing the Anabaptist movement, and then the life of Menno Simons, whose activities were spawned by the Anabaptists, and of which the Mennonite religion is an offshoot.

We are all fairly familiar with the turmoil of the Protestant Reformations and its movers and shakers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, Hulldreich Zwingil and several other zealous reformers who got their dander up and thought the Catholic church needed to either shape up or be reshaped. This they did with a fervor and obsession that always bordered on fanaticism and sometimes far exceeded it. Little, however, is commonly known about the Anabaptists who also played a large role in the Reformation and were the forerunners of the Mennonites.

Anabaptists was a name given to those people who broke away from the dominant types of Protestantism I referred to in the previous paragraph, and instead preferred a voluntary religious association with a vigorous maintenance of New Testament ordinances. The word Anabaptist was also used loosely as a derogatory term against all religious radicals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and so came into common usage also because the term was utilized by most major parties of the Reformation, the Catholics, the Lutherans and Reformed polemicists. The word Anabaptist means baptized again, or rebaptized, or double baptized. The Dutch word for Anabaptists was Doopsgezinde, and in German they were called Tauter, or Taufgesinnte, or Wiedertaufer, or in other words, Double Dippers.

It Is perhaps more constructive to speak of the different wings of the Anabaptist movement: the Swiss Brethren, the South German Brethren, the Moravians, the Hutterites and the Dutch Mennonites, the latter being my ancestors and of special concern in this treatise.

Anabaptism proper began at Zurich in 1524 (five years after Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the church door) when a small band led by Conrad Grebel broke away from Huldrelch Zwingll's leadership and gathered congregations practicing apostolic non-resistance in accordance with Matt. 5:39 of the New Testament. They further insisted on communion (Acts 4:32); government by elders (Acts 14:23) and the ban (Matt. 18:15-17. Impatient with the Reformers' plan to win the cantons of Switzerland to Protestantism by slow, statesmanlike decisions of the Town Councils, they proposed to form free churches of those who heard, believed and were baptized (Matt. 28:18). Although they were savagely persecuted by the authorities of both the State and also the Church (both the Catholic and the Protestant) these Swiss Brethren, as they were called, gained a warm reception among the common people in the German speaking lands. A considerable following developed in Moravia in South Germany, and a parallel movement led by Menno Simons (1496-1561) emerged in the 1540's and 1550's in Holland. It is from this group that the Mennonites in America, in Canada, and those that moved to Russia were descended. I will have more to say about the Russian Mennonites.

Also spawned from the Anabaptist movement is a sect founded by Jacob Hutter in Moravia in 1533, who formed religious colonies holding property in communal possession, not unlike the communists, but there the similarity ends. They have since settled in many colonies in the Dakotas, and in Manitoba and Alberta in Canada, as well as in Paraguay. They still preserve the ancient Christian communism based on the practice of the primitive Christian church described in Acts. Although both were spawned from the Anabaptist movement, the Hutterites are a far cry from the Mennonite groups who were my ancestors. The latter believed strongly in private property as well as in Racial Teamwork.

From the early archives that were exhumed in growing quantities since 1879 it seems that the chief quarrel the Anabaptists had with the mainstream Protestant Reformers was over the union of Church and State. The Anabaptists took the Early Church as their model. They repudiated infant baptism and claimed that it was meaningless, that until an adult professed a confession of faith and was baptized, he had not entered the "true" church. They taught that a "Fall" of the church occurred under Constantine when the secular government took over the religious or spiritual movement of Jesus Christ. Instead, they preached a restitution of primitive church life.

Menno Simons (1496-1561)

Menno Simons was not the founder of the Anabaptists in the Low Countries, but he became its most outstanding leader after it had been in existence for a number of years. He is significant because he took responsibility for leadership at a time and in an area where the movement was floundering and would probably have succumbed to more revolutionary theories. Especially strong were those apocalyptic fanatics who were preaching that Christ's return was imminent and the millennium was at hand. Another radical group were the Muensterites, who preached open revolt and joined with the Peasant's Rebellion in open warfare against the authorities.

Menno Simons was born in 1496 in the little village of Witmarsum, in the Dutch province of Friesland. He joined the Catholic priesthood at the rather late age of 28, and received his training in a monastery in Friesland or an adjoining province. According to his own accounts, he did not initially take his priestly duties too seriously and joined his fellow priests in "playing cards, drinking..." But after the first year he suddenly became frightened, and he began to have doubts when he administered the

Mass as to whether the bread and the wine were actually being changed into the flesh and blood of Christ. At first he considered these thoughts as the whisperings of Satan. But his doubts persisted and he began to have doubts about many other teachings of the Catholic church. He came more and more under the influence of the Sacramentists, who denied the idea of transubstantiation, that is, the presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper.

After two years of torment and doubt he finally turned to the bible in his search for an answer. "I did not get very far before I saw we had been deceived", he said later. He found further help by reading the writings of Martin Luther, who taught that not the church but the Scriptures had to be the prime source and sole authority for his beliefs and preachings. He repudiated the authority of the Catholic church and became an "evangelical preacher" but his theology was still very much in the formative stage, being buffeted about and influenced by a number of other "reformers".

A turning point in Menno's life came when the Muensterites (who favored armed rebellion) were defeated at their "New Jerusalem" at Muenster, Westphalia, and that movement came to a tragic end. This brutal affair is of some significance in the whole Reformation movement, creating a number of martyrs, and it behooves us to digress briefly here.

Muenster, Westphalia, had been seized by force by the Anabaptists on February 9, 1534. Soon thereafter Bernhard Knipperdolling became its mayor. Anabaptists all through Germany, Switzerland and Holland had been hard pressed to stay alive, since persecution against them (and other religious sects) was severe and rampant. When the Muensterites gained control of this particular city it became a gathering point and refuge for numerous other beleaguered Anabaptists all over Europe. Meanwhile, the (Catholic) Bishop Franz of Waldeck, who was the ruler of this territory, gathered a powerful army and laid siege to this city, with a view of exterminating these heretics. After approximately a year of skirmishing he finally broke through the city walls on June 25, 1535. The massacre and cruelty that followed was typical of the intense hatred and religious fervor of the times and we must remember these were Christians on both sides. Most of the male population of the city was put to death. The leaders were put in Iron cages, displayed in various cities of Europe, tortured and then put to death, including former Mayor Knipperdolling.

As we shall see later, what the Christians did to each other during the Reformation is not too unlike the cruelty and terrorism visited upon our Mennonite kinsmen by the Bolsheviks in Russia nearly four centuries later.

The tragic Muenster catastrophe made a deep and traumatic impression on Menno, as he considered that all of these people, to many of whom he had preached, had been willing to lay down their lives in order to cling to their newly found faith. Although he was not in agreement with many of their principles, nevertheless, it steeled his resolve to leave the Catholic church and dedicate the rest of his life to preaching the word as he saw it, regardless of the cost or the risk. His own beliefs were still not fully clear, not fully resolved.

He dedicated his full time to preaching, moving about the country. He also wrote tracts and books from time to time, and as he did so his own theology began to take a more definitive form.

For the next 18 years, from 1536 to 1554, he moved about the country, preaching, writing and winning converts. During this time he also took a wife, but neither the date of the marriage nor his whereabouts have been too clearly recorded. Nor is it known as to when or where his own baptism took place. He became an underground evangelist, preaching and writing in seclusion, baptizing converts whenever and wherever he could. Some of his extant tracts are "The New Birth"; "The Blasphemy of Jan van Leyden", (the latter being an Anabaptist leader); "The Spiritual Resurrection", and several others. He traveled much at night and was in perpetual danger of death and persecution. In 1542 one hundred guilders were offered by the authorities of Leeuwarden for his apprehension. Miraculously, although many of his friends were put to death, some for as much as harboring him overnight or distributing his literature, he managed to survive.

In 1554 he found a measure of shelter and protection with Bartholomeus von Ahlefeldt, on one of the latter's estates, called Wuestenfeld (Desert Field). Here, near the town of Oldesloe in the province of Holstein, his printer began to print some of Menno's books. Menno also took the opportunity to revise some of his earlier editions and write several new books.

But nevertheless, controversy and turmoil continued. Never resolved during his lifetime was the matter of church discipline. Since the Mennonites were committed to nonviolence, nonresistance and professed to a free expression of conscience, how do you keep the church and its members a cohesive organization with a stable creed and identity? It is a question that has also plagued many another organization that has tried to maintain its basic character and originality. It was a question that was not settled for at least another century. The only means the Mennonites employed (and still do) to maintain discipline is the ban and ostracism. In 1557 a large conference of Anabaptists met in Strasbourg to try to resolve this question, but it was in vain. Its failure saddened Menno to the end of his life.

Although his activities may not seem impressive compared to many another preacher and evangelist that may have paraded across the pages of history, nevertheless, the consequences of the movement he founded have mushroomed into a significant series of historical events, the ramifications of which redound unto this day. Unfortunately, although most of his writings have survived, much about his life has not been historically recorded, especially his wanderings during the preaching years of 1536 to 1554. Although a number of pictures of him are depicted along with his writings, no authentic portraits or paintings of him were made during his lifetime, at least none that survived, so any likenesses of him are purely postmortem artists' conceptions, not dissimilar to those attempting to depict the likeness of Christ several hundred years after the supposed event.

During the last years of his life he was crippled, adding further to his agony. His wife had preceded him by a few years when he died at Wuestenfelde on January 31, 1561.

But his movement went on and his followers spread all over the world. It is not my purpose here to pursue the further history of the worldwide movement Menno founded, but rather to briefly illuminate the course of events of my ancestors, the Mennonites in Russia, the flowering of their culture and their prosperity, followed by its ill fated destruction when it was engulfed by the Communist revolution of 1917.

* * * * *

My particular ancestors after several generations in Holland moved as a group into east Prussia, specifically to the Danzig area and founded several cohesive and successful settlements. They were real industrious agrarian farmers. But being productive farmers was not their only accomplishment. They also raised large families and multiplied, taking over more and more land as the number of families expanded. Although in a few generations these Dutch Mennonites became thoroughly Germanized, there was nevertheless one idiosyncrasy that was thoroughly uncharacteristic of the military-minded Prussians. Inherent in the Mennonite religion was the commitment to nonresistance, to passiveness. In short, to pacifism. They deemed it sinful to bear arms, and refused to enter into military service. After a period of time the traditionally military-minded Prussians and their government began to take note of both these factors the expansion of the Mennonite numbers, and their refusal to render military service. Friction began to develop.

Land along the Vistula river in Prussia had become scarce and the Mennonite families were large and expanding. In 1787 Frederick William II of Prussia issued an order of the cabinet which forbade the Mennonites to enlarge their land holdings. The "Mennonite Edict" of 1789 followed with further restrictions. Frederick William III further increased the restrictions by a supplementary declaration In 1801. It became apparent that all these restrictions were aimed more at the Mennonite principle of nonresistance than their increasing expansion. Mennonites who abandoned that principle were free to purchase all the land they wanted.

This presented a crucial problem for the Mennonites, not unfamiliar to the one their ancestors had faced in Holland a few generations previously, and one that their religious cohorts were to face again and again in many other countries. What to do? The solution, they decided, was to emigrate, a solution that has been forced upon them many a time again in their long turbulent history, and in many other parts of the world.

This particular group in Prussia chose to take advantage of an extremely propitious situation that presented itself In Russia. The time was in the 1780's. Catherine II (the Great) of Russia was looking for some industrious farming people to settle some of the wide-open spaces of the Ukraine that had recently been acquired through conquest in a war with Turkey. In order to consolidate her gains she wanted this area settled with good sturdy farmers as quickly as possible. The Mennonites had a reputation for being hard-working, industrious and exceptionally successful farmers.

After some scouting and negotiating a deal was struck. The Mennonites could have not only a large tract of contiguous land, but they would forever be exempt from military service. Furthermore, they would be relatively free to set up their own local government without too much interference from the Russian government.

In 1789 the first group of 228 Prussian Mennonite families moved into what was called the Chortitza settlement. It was located on the Dnieper River in the southern Ukraine between the cities of Ekaterinoslav and Alexandrovsk. (Since the Communist revolution both of these cities have been renamed to Dnepropetrovsk and Zaporozhe, respectively.) In 1797 a second train of 118 families followed, all of which soon expanded to about 400 families, and they became the basis of the Chortitza settlement. In 1819 the settlement consisted of 560 families with 2888 souls, and in 1910 about 2000 families with about 12,000 members. As I said, the Mennonites were not only good farmers, but they were also prolific in expanding their own kind. Their numbers Increased at a significant rate of about 5% annually.

The Molotschna Colony

In spite of the reports of hardships experienced by the Chortitza settlers, it was, nevertheless, an outstanding success. This quickly encouraged a large second group to follow suit, and a new movement to the steppes of the Ukraine began in 1803. This group was to become the Molotschna Colony, the area settled by my ancestors, and where several generations later I was born in the village of Rudnerweide. The Molotschna colony was to become not only the largest Mennonite colony in Russia, but also its most prosperous.

In many ways, inn sheer logistics and numbers, these migrations were in every way the equal of the Mormon Trek into Utah led by Brigham Young. The Mennonites preceded the Mormon move by about 50 and 60 years respectively, but they, too, moved into wide-open and uncivilized territory, as did the Mormons.

The motivating force propelling the Mennonites was the determination to stick with their particular religious creed, of which the principle of nonresistance (wehrlosigkeit) was of major significance. In 1809 Czar Paul I had given the Mennonites the special "Privtlegtum", or a set of privileges, of which freedom from military service was a major one. The first Molotschna group arrived at Chortitza in the fall of 1803. Other groups followed, making a total of 365 families through the years of 1803-1806. These immigrants were on the average much more prosperous than were those who had first gone to Chortitza.

However, various problems impeded the movement's growth for several years. Prussian authorities insisted on keeping 10% of the property of those leaving the country. For a while passports were refused. The Napoleonic wars, which were in progress at the time, stopped immigration temporarily. Nevertheless, in 1819-20 a total of 254 more families migrated to Molotschna, followed sporadically by further groups. By 1835 migration to Molotschna came to a close, with a total of 1200 families residing there and an estimated population of 6000. Once the Mennonites were established in their new colony on the steppes of the Ukraine, they lost no time organizing themselves. They had 120,000 desslatines (324,000 acres) of good fertile land located east of the Molotschna river along its tributaries of the Tokmak, Begemthsokrah, Kurushan and the Yushanlee. They were located about 100 miles southeast of the earlier Chortitza settlement. To the west resided non-Mennonite German settlers, to the north and cast Ukrainians, and to the south nomadic tribes such as the Turks and the Tatars.

They organized the land holdings into 175-acre farms per family. These could not be cut up and partitioned into smaller farms, a wise and farsighted restriction. The families did not necessarily live on their main acreage, but lived contiguously to each other in hamlets and villages, where each had an acre or two around their dwelling. The house and barn usually adjoined each other into one large building. Next to their dwelling in the village each family had a good-sized orchard and garden plot, but the main farm itself might be half a mile or a mile away.

Soon the Molotschna colony had organized its holdings, and a total of 60 villages had been built, of which Rudnerweide (established 1820) where I was born, was one. Here is a short synopsis of their progress.

In the first year of 1804, ten villages were established. In the next year eight more villages were founded. By 1821 sixteen more villages and hamlets had sprung up. By 1863 the remaining 26 villages had been built and all the available land had been occupied and utilized. The newly found freedom, the abundance of fertile acreage brought on a glow of prosperity and an unlimited optimism for the future. Having come from excellent racial stock in Prussia, such a combined set of circumstances also produced some outstanding personalities and leaders. I have a large, four volume Mennonite Encyclopedia with a total of approximately 3800 pages. In it are chronicled hundreds of outstanding personalities and leaders who benefited the Mennonite cause in many parts of the world, including many of whom once resided in the Molotschna colony. Although I cannot go into detail about them, there is one early leader that I believe warrants special mention because of his manifold contributions to the colony. His name was Johann Cornies.

Johann Cornies (1789-1848)

Although these pioneering settlers had already proved themselves to be experienced and industrious farmers in Prussia, their progress was substantially enhanced by one Johann Cornies and the Agricultural Association that he headed. The many constructive improvements he contributed to the colony and even to the country of Russia were broad and far-reaching and their influence extended far beyond his own lifespan.

In the field of agriculture they included such areas as up-grading the breeds of cattle, horses and sheep; experimenting with and selecting better seed grains; crop rotation and many other advances in agriculture that were completely novel for that day and age. He was especially vigorous in promoting the planting of trees and orchards around every farmhouse and homestead on the formerly treeless steppes. But his energy was not limited to the improvement of agronomy. He was also extremely active in the fields of education and the structuring of model colonies, activities that extended to other peoples far beyond the boundaries of the Mennonite settlements, as we shall see.

Johann Cornies was born on June 20, 1789, at Baerwalde, near Danzig, in the state of Prussia. He migrated with his parents in 1804 to the infant Mennonite colony of Chortitza, but after a two year stay the family joined the new colony on the banks of the Molotschna, where like many others, they took over a homestead of 175 acres. They settled in the newly founded village of Ohrioff. Here father Cornies became the village "doctor", using medicinal herbs found on the steppes, doing what healing he could until his death In 1814.

Johann was the oldest of four sons. He first worked a year as a laborer for a miller at Ohrioff. During the next three years he marketed farm produce from the surrounding settlements to the nearby Russian cities. In 1811, at the age of 22, he married Agnes Klassen, and in the following year he bought a homestead of his own at Ohrioff. Being a man of imagination and vision, he soon recognized the favorable opportunities which the fertile steppes provided for expansion and development of the agricultural industry.

He started out by breeding sheep. He leased fallow-lying government land nearby for grazing. By 1830 Cornies expanded by leasing another 9000 acres of government land along the Yushanlee river, where until now he had maintained his small sheep ranch. Six years later Czar Nicholas I gave him 1350 acres of this land as a reward for his outstanding services in agriculture. Here he also began to raise cattle, and soon began to cultivate 729 acres of this land. He used 16 acres to start a large nursery which was to furnish the Molotschna colony with tree seedlings. He also began to plant a forest on the formerly treeless steppes, which in a few years numbered 68,000 trees.

As early as 1816, at age 27, Cornies undertook his first successful attempts at horse-breeding, and also at about this time started importing bulls for the improvement of his cattle. The progeny of such improved stock he promoted and made available to the other colonists. We must remember that the idea of breeding cattle selectively to improve the stock was relatively new at this time and not widely practiced. In America in the 1820's the ranchers had hardly even started to round up the wild remnants of the Spanish longhorns, and predominantly stayed with this lean and unproductive species for the next eighty years or more.

By 1847 Cornies' own livestock consisted of 500 horses, 8000 sheep and 200 head of Dutch cattle. Two years after his establishment at the Yushanlee, Cornies purchased Tashchenak, an estate of 9450 acres near Melitopol, and ten years later the Verigin estate, so that he was soon cultivating 25,000 acres. (This was outside of the Molotschna colony, and not adjoining it.) His own brickyard produced the brick for the many buildings he erected, and he also expanded into commercial tile works. Both were profitable.

The Russian government soon took note of the success of Cornies' large-scale activities. As early as 1817 it made the 28-year-old Cornies a life-long chairman of the Society for the Effective Promotion of Forestation, Horticulture, Silk Industry and Vine Culture, later called the Agricultural Association I mentioned earlier.

Cornies was tireless in his efforts not only to find methods of farming best suited to the locality, but also in opening up new Industrial possibilities for the settlers. For a long time he experimented with building a silk industry and planting mulberry trees on which the silkworms feed. He even built a school in Ohrioff to instruct girls in the art of silk reeling. However the Ohrioff silkworm plague combined with stiff foreign competition thwarted success. His venture into the tobacco industry suffered a similar fate.

But Cornies was not daunted and most of his ventures were highly successful, all of which benefits were passed on to the Molotschna colonists. He dammed streams and irrigated meadows, tremendously improving both pasture land and the hay crop. He was especially zealous in planting forests, understanding the value and significance of trees on the formerly treeless steppes. In 1845 over half a million fruit and forest trees had been planted in the Molotschna alone, to which 300,000 mulberry trees were added. Six years later there were over five million trees in the 47 villages. Cornies also instructed settlers in raising vegetables and flowers. Through his foresight and aggressive leadership he veritably turned the Molotschna colony into the garden spot of Russia.

But his influence was not limited to the Mennonites alone. In 1839 the Russian government showed exceptional confidence in Cornies' outstanding leadership and educational abilities and they placed a number of young Russians in his hands for instruction in practical agriculture. A little later these trained Russians established special model villages. Many Russian and Ukrainian farmers were sent to the Mennonite settlements to learn how to raise potatoes, a crop that had not been grown in the area until Cornies promoted it.

His Instruction and leadership, with the blessing of the Russian government, soon extended further afield. Cornies' aid was given to the Dukhobors and Molokans and he was made responsible for placing model Mennonite farmers in the newly established Jewish settlements in the province of Kherson. He was also instrumental in settling the nomadic Nogals into a 17,000 member colony in 1835. However, these sometime later emigrated to Turkey.

Cornies accomplished much through his tireless energy and sometimes ruthless determination, but it was not without considerable opposition in some quarters from his own Mennonite constituents. This was especially so from some of the more fanatic religious leaders, of which there were a considerable number. This opposition was most obvious in the field of education in which Cornies had a special concern, and which he insisted was badly in need of reform. Until 1843 the Mennonite schools in Russia were controlled by the church. Farmer-teachers instructed the children and there were no trained teachers as such. The only sources of education were the ABC-book, the Bible, the catechism and the hymnbook.

As early as 1818 Cornies founded the Society for Christian Education which built its first Secondary School in Ohrioff in 1820. He also built a library and created a reading circle. Under his urging in 1843 all Mennonite schools were placed under the Society that Cornies had formed in 1818, and he divided the Molotschna settlement into six school districts. He was especially concerned about the curriculum and content of the children's education and in this direction he laid down a set of rules. His contribution in this respect was a curriculum he produced called "General Rules Concerning Instruction and Treatment of School Children" which reveal his vision and understanding of what was needed to greatly improve education and the system as a whole. Although he was chairman of the Society for Christian Education for only five years, from 1843 until his early death in 1848, his long-range work produced real reform in Mennonite education that lasted until the colony crumbled under the Communist onslaught during and after World War I. In fact his influence and foresight made the Mennonites the most literate and best-educated group of people in Russia. A year before his death the Department of Crown Lands also placed the Chortitza schools under his management.

Cornies' influence and activities spread far beyond the limits of the Mennonite colonies. This was shown by the esteem in which he was held by the South Russian authorities and by the government at St. Petersburg (now Leningrad.). These officials showed their appreciation for his manifold contributions by various honors bestowed upon him. Czar Alexander I and also the Crown Prince visited him in 1825. In 1837 he was received by Czar Nicholas I at Simferopol. He refused various other honors and medals that were conferred upon him, accepting only a simple gold commemorative medal.

Cornies died at the relatively early age of 59. Despite his broad knowledge of agriculture and people, it is doubtful that he was aware of the basic principles proscribed in Salubrious Living. Hardly anybody of that time period was. Had he been aware of the few simple rules we embody in our 14 Basic Points, it is very likely that he would have been able to prolong his energetic and creative life for perhaps another 20 or 30 years, during which time he could, and undoubtedly would, have added even more to the voluminous and productive contributions he had already made to his people and community.

When he died on March 13, 1848, a huge crowd attended his funeral. Among them besides the Mennonites he had served so well were also a significantly large number of Ukrainians, Russians, Nogals, Molokans and Tatars. Such was the influence of a single immigrant boy from Danzig. Despite all the honors that were heaped upon him, and although he became a very wealthy man, at heart his lifestyle and orientation remained that of a hardworking Mennonite farmer, whose foremost desires were to push ever forward, to achieve progress and advancement of his society and the world around him.

By 1850, the Molotschna colony was progressing beautifully. In fact, the favorable soil and climatic conditions, abetted by the farsighted leadership of such men as Cornies and others that followed, plus the industriousness of the majority of its farmers, all combined to make the Molotschna colony the garden spot of not only the Ukraine, but, it was conceded, of all of Russia. Catherine the Great had made a wise choice when she invited the Mennonites to come in as potential settlers.

After 1850 several changes came into play that further enhanced the prosperity of the colony, and also presented new problems for its rapidly expanding population.

With the introduction of hard winter wheat, and the improvement of formerly rather crude farm machinery, more intensive farming came about. Winter wheat became the chief crop, and as a result the milling industry expanded significantly. Factories for farm machinery were built. In addition many other branches of business began to thrive so that business and manufacturing became significant adjuncts of a formerly agricultural community. Furthermore, since this community produced not only prosperity but also large families, a landless class became a growing problem. The 175-acre farms were not subject to being subdivided, a farsighted provision that remained in force.

Finally in 1866 the landless population persuaded the Russian government to distribute the community surplus and reserve land which had formerly been rented out mostly to well-to-do farmers. This the government did, and each formerly landless family thus received 16 desslatines (approximately 40 acres) of land, and with it the right to vote.

This only partially solved the land and space problems of a rapidly expanding population of intelligent and industrious people. The Mennonite leaders set about to solve this problem, and also being energetic and resourceful administrators, they did solve it effectively. A colonization program was developed whereby the surplus population was given the opportunity to establish their own homes in new settlements called daughter colonies. The administration of the mother settlements created funds for the purchase of new lands, and supervised the purchase, the financing and the distribution of such lands. To their credit, it should be noted that the Chortitza colony had already established daughter colonies much earlier, the first such colony being in 1836 in Bergenthal. However, in this matter the Molotschna colony, although later in its own establishment and that of daughter colonies, once started, far exceeded the Chortitza colony in both enterprises.

The first daughter colony was established in 1862 in the Crimea (Taurida province) and consisted of 25 villages on 108,000 acres of land. This was followed by 12 more settlements ranging over a wide area of Russia all the way from Turkestan to the Caucasus. The last of the 13 daughter colonies was established in the Terek (Caucasus) in 1901 on 76,950 acres of land and consisted of 15 villages.

In addition to these settlements, the Molotschna Mennonites purchased in their neighborhoods and in various provinces smaller and larger estates, which were known as Khutas. Some of these estate builders became extremely wealthy. Other enterprising individuals established prosperous places of business, such as retail and wholesale stores and factories.

Besides the 13 daughter colonies mentioned earlier, Molotschna settlers established a number of colonies in Siberia, having over 100 villages with an acreage of over one million.

Whereas the Mennonite colonies were an astounding success by almost any yardstick, and although they had originally been welcomed and given certain assurances of semi-autonomy with no military service obligations, friction began to develop between the Mennonites on the one hand, and the Russian government and people on the other hand. Partly this was engendered by the Mennonites' remarkable industry and prosperity, partly because of envy and jealousy, and partly by the changing of the regimes at the head of government.

By 1870 the Mennonites had to accept state service in some form. If not direct military service, this might consist of a few years of conscription into the forestry service, or some similar commitment. This led the Molotschna colony into new negotiations with the government, and also towards emigration to America.

Whereas most of the Chortitza emigrants went to Canada, most of the Molotschna emigrants went to the United States. Of the total from all the colonies, at least half of the 18,000 people that emigrated during this period came from the Molotschna colony.

We now bring this prosperous, thriving Molotschna colony up to World War I, the Communist revolution of 1917 and the disaster that followed, a disaster for which the otherwise farsighted Mennonite leaders had left their precious colonies totally unprepared.

World War I and the Communist Revolution

Hostility against the Mennonites did not start with the Communist revolution. Hate against everything German had been assiduously built up by the international Jewish propaganda machine for the previous 50 years, and it found fertile ground in Russia. This was by no means aimed exclusively at the Mennonites, but even more so at the German colonies that were of various religious denominations. There were a number of these, Lutheran, Catholic, etc., some of which were larger than the Mennonite colonies. They, too, were relatively prosperous, and aroused the envy and jealousy of the less affluent Russians.

The first overt action against the German speaking colonists was the decree of November 3, 1914, (WW I was In progress) forbidding the use of the German language in press or public assembly of more than three persons, under threat of a 3000 ruble fine and three months in prison. Armed with this Draconian decree thousands of ethnic Germans were transported to central Asia and to Siberia. The second official action included property liquidation laws of February 2 and December 13 of 1915, which were further harshened in the next two years.

According to the liquidation laws the properties were to be sold within eight months of the date of the decree. If the property was not sold voluntarily, the banks were given the first opportunity to purchase, which they did promptly, at about 10% of their actual value. Whereas the large estates were victimized first, soon all the properties of German speaking owners were targeted for pirating actions, including the Mennonites.

To escape liquidation, the German speaking Swiss colonists of Lutheran persuasion sought to prove their non-German origins. The Mennonites followed their example and sent a delegation to St. Petersburg, (then the capital of Russia, name now changed to Leningrad) In December, 1916, to try to document their Dutch ancestry. The effort to deny their German background came to be known the Hollanderel of the Mennonites. The same argument was raised again by the Canadian Mennonites to resist registration requirements during World War II, and again in the European refugee crisis following that war.

The actual identity of the Russian Mennonites with regard to Dutch or German origins has never been fully settled. Since I personally am included in this category, I don't categorically say whether I am of Dutch or German ancestry, or a mixture of both. In any case, I am happy and proud to fit into any of the above, and suspect that the latter is the most likely, but I am not going to lose any sleep over It. In any case, the fact remains that the Russian Mennonites had taken their cultural and educational nourishment exclusively from German sources, spoke German, and during their long stay in Prussia had undoubtedly absorbed much German blood.

The same Jewish revolutionary elements that had been fomenting hatred against all things German had for the last several centuries also been carrying on a vicious and deadly racial war against the Russian Czars. In fact, this insurgency had been directed not only against the government, but against all the non-Jewish Russian people, especially the White Russians who had brought civilization and orderly government to Russia a thousand years earlier. At the time of the Communist revolution Russia harbored the largest mass of Jews in the world, officially numbering approximately six million, but the actual number was undoubtedly much higher. These were the Khazar Jews, a swarthy Turkish tribe stemming from the ancient Khazar Empire that lay between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. This tribe was converted to Judaism en masse by their ruler In the eighth century. In 1083 they were conquered by the Russian Archduke Yaraslov and absorbed into the Russian empire. But they were never assimilated and remained a fiercely hostile and revolutionary element, finally bringing about the downfall of Russia in 1917. As they spread into Poland and the rest of Europe they have proved to be a disruptive and disintegrating virus in every country that had the misfortune of becoming their unwilling host. Khazar Jews, now spread all over the world, make up 90% of the total Jewish population.

Warfare between Russia and the conspiratorial Jews started in earnest in the Sixteenth century, and kept on heating up until the Jews finally overthrew the Romanov dynasty in 1917, and behind the facade of "communism", clamped an ironclad dictatorship on the Russian people. But the controlling iron fist that was in charge of Communism was entirely Jewish, and it remains so to this day.

Whereas the Czarist government had taken a hostile attitude towards all things German, it was relatively mild compared to the beastly viciousness of the Communist regime that followed. And in this matter the Germans and the Mennonites were by no means the sole victims of the fierce onslaught that followed. When the Communists took over in November of 1917 they first of all shot the Czar and his entire family in some dingy basement in which they had the family imprisoned. Thus ended the Romanov Dynasty and with it the ruling influence of the White Russians who had brought culture and ruled Slavic Russia for the last thousand years. A reign of terror, of bloodshed and the wholesale slaughter of 30 million White Russians, the descendants of the Vikings who had built Russia, was under way.

With the former Czarist government in shambles, the Bolshevik (Jewish Communist) leaders lost no time in consolidating their forces and taking charge. Leon Trotsky, a Jew, soon had mustered an army of five million revolutionaries. Although disunited and badly lacking in leadership, opposition forces sprang up to try to quell the Bolsheviks. Remnants of the Czarist armies, the old ruling classes, the Orthodox Church, the large property owners, all tried to organize opposition that was fragmentary at best, into what was called the "White Army." Badly organized, they were united only in opposition to the Bolsheviks, who had the advantage in being more vicious and determined in both leadership and followers. It was now the Red Army against the White Army, a situation the Jews dearly love in deploying their Divide and Conquer technique, namely having their enemies divided into two hostile camps and killing each other off. For the next three years civil war raged over the land in both mass and sporadic local battles. As in most civil wars, terror and atrocities abounded, and the Russian civil war was no exception. In fact, it exceeded most civil wars in both cruelty and atrocities, and we are reminded of the terrors of the Muenster affair in Westphalia nearly four hundred years earlier in which the Mennonites were also caught up due to no fault of their own. The Ukraine and the Middle Volga area where most of the Mennonites lived were hardest hit by the ravages of the civil war. This was undoubtedly at least partly due to their former affluence, which made the Mennonites choice targets for looters and privateers.

We have now reached the point in time and place where the personal events of my family and myself become involved, and I believe it is incumbent that I now pick up the story from here by relating the history and experiences of the Klassen family in the Ukraine.

Family Genealogy

It just so happens that I have two uncles by the name of Jacob. I should really say had, since both are now deceased. One uncle was Jacob Klassen, my dad's oldest brother, who lived and died in the Molotschna colony in the Ukraine. My other uncle with that same first name was Jacob Wiens, who married my dad's youngest sister Margaret, and who with his wife and two kids emigrated to Herschel, Saskatchewan, in the year 1925. The latter uncle, before he died in 1978, rendered a memorable service to both the Klassen family and the Wiens family by compiling a detailed genealogy of both families, a project on which he labored many years. Fortunately, I acquired a copy of the Klassen segment of that compilation a few years ago, and have found it to be a veritable goldmine of source material for tracing my ancestry. For this I am eternally indebted to my Uncle Jacob W., whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for more than 50 years and whom I considered as my favorite uncle.

As I list the names of various relatives, there is one little quirk that may seem peculiar and I believe I should explain at the outset, and that is the designation of middle names. It was customary with the Mennonites in Russia to automatically adopt the father's first name as the middle name for each boy born into that family. For instance, my dad's first name was Bernhard, his dad's first name was Kornelius, therefore my dad was named Bernhard Kornelius Klassen, and every other boy In that large family also had Kornelius as his middle name. However, no such rule evidently applied to girls, who, as far as I know, were left without a middle name.

My paternal grandfather was born on April 10, 1855, in the Molotschna hamlet of Ellzabetthal, and named Kornelius Jacob Klassen. His father, Jacob Klassen, was born on March 12, 1823, presumably in the Molotschna colony, but I do not have a record of exactly where. Jacob's wife's maiden name was Augustee Penner. She was born in Danzig on October 17, 1826. The two were married on July 4, 1843, and subsequently had eight children, of which my grandfather was the third.

My paternal grandmother's maiden name was Sarah Bergen. She was born on May 8, 1854, where, Uncle Jacob did not record. She was a hardy soul, extremely fecund, as we shall see, and lived to the ripe old age of 89. She died in the fluctuating ravages of WW II, on November 29, 1943, where and how I do not know. Her father's name was Bernhard Bergen, born July 22, 1816, and died December 10, 1882. His wife's maiden name was Sarah Klassen (January 22. 1820 - November 6, 1883). Bernhard Bergen and Sarah Klassen were married sometime in 1841, and had seven children, of which my grandmother was the fifth.

So much for third, fourth and fifth generation ancestors. I recapitulate them mostly for the record. I do, however, want to take special notice of my paternal grandparents, Kornelius J. Klassen and Sarah Bergen.

They were married on December 30, 1875, when he was 20 and she was 21. The place was Hierschau, one of the Molotschna villages. They lost no time whatsoever going into production and doing that which Nature has instinctively programmed each creature to do, namely, reproducing and nurturing their own kind. Within a month and a half after they were married they had their first child and named her Justina. (No middle name for girls, as I mentioned before.) They had the good fortune to live in the Molotschna colony at the height of its prosperity and when big families were the norm. They made the best of both situations, and in the next 21 years they bore another 13 children, of which my father was the third. Of the 14 children they produced, 12 lived to adulthood, most of them married and had good-sized families of their own. So you can see that on my father's side I had a plenitude of uncles and aunts and cousins.

Four families of that large brood emigrated out of Russia in the middle 1920's. Besides my dad's family, these included that of my Uncle Jacob Wiens mentioned earlier, my Uncle Abe Klassen and his clan, and Uncle John Klassen and his wife Lena. The latter three families moved to Herschel, Saskatchewan, in 1925, where we were to join them before the end of that same year. But more about that later.

Unfortunately, there was no Uncle Jacob on my mother's side to chronicle the genealogy of her ancestors, so what information I have is very limited. Nor was this side of the family as robust or as prolific as was the Klassen side.

My mother's maiden name was Susanna Penner. She was born in the hamlet of Rudnerweide on November 23, 1883, the daughter of Heinrich Penner and his wife. Although I have a picture of the whole Penner family taken in 1887, I do not have any further information regarding my grandmother's name, nor date or place of her birth. An old family bible that I have inherited, which has a few random records listed in it, says that Grandfather Penner was born December 16, 1851, but nothing about where he was born, when he died, or when or where they were married. I do recall my mother telling me that her parents had five children, three boys, my mother and Aunt Katharina. The three boys all died In their teens, and Aunt Katharina married and lived in the village of Prangenau.

Grandmother Penner died sometime after mother and her youngest sister were born. Heinrich Penner married again, and in about 1912, he and his wife set out for America, California to be exact. Evidently, they purchased a farm at Reedley, in Central California. Not being too well versed in either the English language or in the ways of unscrupulous real estate operators, he entered into a land contract that was loaded with a booby trap he did not understand too well. It had a clause in it that demanded some hefty balloon payments after a year or so. These he neither understood nor anticipated, and after about a two year stay, the farm was repossessed, grandpa having not only lost his farm, but also all the payments he had poured into the farm, as well as his entire nest egg.

He and his wife returned to Russia, he a broken man and penniless. He was now in his early sixties, and in poor health. They moved in with my parents in Rudnerweide. Evidently, he lived for another four years or so, since I remember my mother telling me how Grandpa used to play with me and bounce me around on his knee. Grandma Penner, after his death, evidently acquired a domicile at the other end of Rudnerweide. She was still alive and well when we left Russia in 1924, and I remember her as a sweet and lovely grandmother with whom we had many enjoyable visits, both at her house and at ours.

My dad and mother were married in the village of Groswelde on January 26, 1906. (These hamlets and villages were all in the Molotschna colony I have described previously.) They, in turn, had five children, namely, my older brothers Henry (Heinrich) and Kornelius, and my sisters Sarah and Katie (Katharina). I was the youngest, born February 7, 1918. (Besides the quirk about middle names, I should also explain the oddity that all these dates are according to the old fashioned Julian calendar in use in Russia at that time. These dates are all 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar we now use, and therefore 13 days should be added. As a result my birthday is actually February 20.)

Knowledge of my own family history before I was born is also somewhat scanty. I do know that my dad, who was born in Mariawohl on November 25, 1878, did serve in the Forestry Corps for four years in the Crimea. This was in lieu of otherwise mandatory military service and occurred shortly before he was married. I still have an excellent photo of him at this time (1904) showing him in corps uniform. After completing the service he married my mother at the time and place previously stated. He then became manager of a lumberyard in Nelgowka for several years until in 1912 he bought his father-in-law's farm in the village of Rudnerweide. It was here that I was born and where the family lived for the next twelve years until we departed from Russia in 1924.

Civil War, Revolution, Anarchy and Terrorism in Russia

By the time I was born in February of 1918, all hell had broken loose in the Molotschna colony. Not that I had anything to do with the course of events, but nevertheless, the timing couldn't have been more propitious. Whereas the real Bolshevik breakthrough had taken place in Moscow and St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) in the month of November, 1917, the shock waves arrived in our area a few weeks later, and anarchy, pandemonium and terror were unleashed on the hapless Mennonite population, a hellish nightmare for which they had been totally unprepared. Even had they been able to foresee the doom and disaster that awaited their precious Garden Spot, I doubt that there was much of anything they could have done to avert the outrageous tragedy that was about to engulf them. The Jewish revolutionaries had planned too well. They had set in motion a massive Juggernaut of such magnitude that neither the Mennonites, nor even the Russian people, were now able to stop this evil monster from pursuing its ruthless path of destruction. History was on the march and the forces of evil were of a worldwide nature. The Mennonite victims were but a small segment of the sacrifices that were to be exacted by the malevolent beast that was set loose on devouring the very foundations of civilization.

The first thing the Bolsheviks did after they had destroyed the Czarist regime and had themselves seized power, was to open wide the gates of the penitentiaries and let loose all the hardened criminals on a defenseless population. Not only did they encourage these criminals to run wild, but they readily supplied them with guns so they could terrorize the population at large. Since law and order had already broken down, since the economy was in shambles and the population frightened and confused. It soon became a matter of survival, a matter of every man for himself. In this state of bedlam, as always in history, the first groups to organize themselves were the criminal gangs, and this is exactly what happened in the Ukraine.

The reign of terror in the Mennonite colonies began soon after the Bolshevik Revolution. Temporarily, the Kerensky government held a shaky sway in the power struggle succeeding the Czar. It was soon replaced by the iron-fisted "Workers' Soviets", the real Jewish Marxists. These councils, which consisted of criminals, Jews, former prisoners and other dregs of society, soon took over and exercised their brutality, as in other areas of Russia. The Mennonites in the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies from November, 1917, until April of 1918, when the German troops arrived, lived under constant fear of robbery, imprisonment, torture and murder. The largest city, Halbstadt, in the Molotschna colony, was the hardest hit. In the days of February 16-19, known as the "Halbstadter Tage" a band of Bolshevik Marines took over. People were shot without court hearings, homes were looted and ransacked, most of the horses were stolen, women were raped.

In April of 1918, the German troops arrived in the Molotschna colony and with them they brought a semblance of peace and security to the Ukraine. The Mennonites were sympathetic to the German occupation, since it offered them relief from the brutality of the Bolsheviks and the anarchistic robber bands. Some of the Mennonites even loaned funds to the German occupation government.

The end of World War I and the defeat of Germany in November of 1918 brought about the withdrawal of German troops from Russia. This action was immediately followed by a renewed reign of terror.

In his youth Nestor Makhno had been a Russian cattle herder on the estates of some wealthy Mennonite landowners. Now 35 years of age, he soon became one of the dregs of the revolution who organized the peasants and terrorist bands that were to ravage and wreak havoc on the hapless countryside. Being of a criminal nature, he had spent a number of years in Siberian exile. Now that the country was in a state of anarchy, he seized the opportunity to wreak vengeance on anybody and everybody for his former deprivations, imagined or otherwise. Even before the German troops left, he had started organizing the revolutionary riff-raff in the province of Ekaterinoslav. By the time of the German withdrawal he had an army of 100,000 followers, all criminals, all hostile to humanity, their hatred directed against everybody, including the communists. They carried a black flag with the inscription: Anarchy is the Mother of all Order. Having stolen most of the horses in the countryside, they exemplified terror on horseback as they carried out their program of plunder, rape and murder with a vengeance.

With the German troops gone, the Mennonite colonies now stood defenseless and alone against the murdering marauders of Makhno. Their traditional religious tenet of non-resistance was now put to a severe test. Encouraged by German soldiers (some of which remained) some of the young Mennonite men had decided to arm themselves to defend their loved ones against the brutal ravages of the Makhnovskys. This action was known as the Selbstschutz (self-defense) and lasted from November, 1918, (when the Germans left) to March of 1919.

The center of conflict was the Catholic colony of Blumental, where Catholic, Lutheran and Mennonite defense troops (all German speaking) fought the Makhno troops for three months. Outnumbered by reinforced bands of criminals the Sebstschutz began a two-day retreat from Blumental to Halbstadt (the center of the Molotschna colony) fighting all the way. Panic broke loose in the Molotschna villages, and hundreds of wagons of Mennonite, Catholic, and Lutheran refugees fled in the direction of the Crimea. Through the influence of three Lutheran medical doctors they were persuaded to return the following day. From their inception, the Selbstschutz had decided they would not fight the Bolsheviks and Trotsky's five million member Red Army. When they discovered that the Bolshevik and Makhnovskys had now joined forces, they laid down their arms on March 11, 1919. The Mennonite colonies were now completely at the mercy of massive bands of vicious armed criminals.

On the condition that they could have absolute sway in the province of Taurida (where the Mennonite colonies were located) the Makhnovskys placed themselves under the command of the Bolsheviks. This period, which lasted from March to July of 1919, proved to be a time of ultimate horror, terror and brutality for the Molotschna colony. Many of the Selbstschutz young men were shot down in cold blood. Others were sent to prison in Berdjansk and Melitopol. The wealthier Mennonite land and factory owners were killed in gruesome fashion. The Revolutionary Tribunal (shades of the French Revolution, in which the Jews murdered the best of the French leadership by the thousands) sat in Melitopol. Every week during these months, hundreds of death sentences were passed, including a number of Mennonites. In many instances the Kommissars were the former laborers on the estates of Mennonite landowners, who now exercised their criminal powers to wreak vengeance on their former employers. Such is the nature of criminals when in power.

From July to October of 1919, the White Armies of Deniken drove out the Makhnovskys and the Bolsheviks and maintained control in the south. Temporarily the Crimea, the Molotschna and the Old Colony (Chortitza) had a reprieve and a breathing spell. As Deniken moved farther north, the Makhno forces rallied and broke through the Deniken front again, overrunning the Old Colony and Molotschna from October, 1919, to January, 1920.

In the Molotschna colony terrorism ran rampant. All suffered from beastly criminals gone berserk. The village of Blumenort was hardest hit and here is one incident of many that exemplifies the viciousness and criminality of the perpetrators let loose on the former peaceful and prosperous Mennonites. On November 10 (1919) fourteen men were sent into the basement of a house. After shooting into the group for a while, the Makhno bandits threw hand grenades at the wounded survivors, finally indulging themselves by slaughtering with swords any signs of life left among the mutilated bodies. Six other men were killed outside. The women and girls were raped, and even wives in stages of pregnancy were not spared. The whole village was then burned to the ground as an act of revenge for the death of four Makhnovskys at the hands of a partisan group (not Mennonite). A few days later these same murderers were slaughtered by fierce Cossack troops who were on the side of the White Army. At Christmas time the Makhnovskys returned to the Molotschna colony, but were driven out by the Bolshevik troops In January of 1920. The Old Colony (Chortitza) had even a more difficult time than did the Molotschna colony. For four long months from October, 1919, to January, 1920, the robber bands held sway. In the village of Eichenfeld 81 men and four women were murdered in one night alone. The village was then burned to the ground. Six other villages suffered a similar fate, also being burned to the ground. The 15 villages that remained in the Chortitza-Nicolalpol district, were completely stripped and plundered. Farmers were fortunate if they were left with a horse and a manure wagon with which to take the bodies to the cemetery. Women and girls were violated and raped en masse with resulting plagues of venereal disease. The hospital at Chortitza at one time registered 100 VD cases. Murder casualties in the Chortitza district numbered 245 victims. The Zagradov district, although equipped with weapons, insisted on remaining non-resistant in compliance with their religious tenets. This did absolutely nothing to mitigate the ferocity of the criminal attackers, and the Makhno brigands here instituted a literal blood bath. Over 200 men, women and children were either shot down or cut to pieces by sword.

The terrorist acts of the criminal bands were soon followed by a plague of typhoid fever. The Makhnovskys had frequently occupied the beds of the Mennonite villagers. Since most of the sheets had long been stolen and the bandits were filthy scum with the most filthy personal habits, very unsanitary conditions prevailed in the Old Colony, to say the least, and disease spread like wild fire. In the village of Rosenthal with 1346 Inhabitants, 1183 were infected with the malady. Of the 678 residents of the Chortitza village nearly all, a total of 662, were sick. In the village of Schoenhorst, out of 350, more than 130 died. The village of Neudorf, with a former population of 2000, soon had 384 orphans as a result of the plague. During the winter of 1919-1920 approximately 1500 died of typhus in the Old Colony alone. The plague was checked only after fresh supplies of clean linen and bedding arrived from the Molotschna colony, which, although also suffering from the epidemic, was not as hard hit.

From January to June of 1920 the Mennonite colonies were under the control of the criminal Bolsheviks. In the summer of that year the White armies, now under the leadership of Wrangel, the successor to Deniken, again challenged the Bolshevik Red armies in that area. From June to September the front seesawed up and down through the Mennonite colonies, with some areas changing hands as many as 23 times. In November of 1920 the Bolsheviks finally pushed Wrangel back and thereafter gained control of all of South Russia. Wrangel and about 135,000 civilian and military refugees, including many Mennonites, fled on French ships from the Crimea to Constantinople to begin their lives as émigrés elsewhere.

In this compendium of terror, civil war and criminal rampage, I have been concentrating mainly on the fate of the Mennonite colonies, since that is what this story is all about. However, it is incumbent to point out that although heavy as their suffering In this holocaust was, they were only a small part of the tragedy that the Bolshevik Jews unleashed upon Russia. In fact, even percentage wise, the mass slaughter of the Mennonites was far below that suffered by the Russians as a whole. After the few years of war, revolution, civil war, epidemics of disease, and finally famine, Russia showed a population loss of over 20 million (some say the figure of 30 million is closer). This is proportionately considerably higher than that suffered by the Mennonites. However, to chronicle all the atrocities, murders and wholesale slaughter throughout the land, although of unprecedented magnitude, is not in the scope of this book.

Suffice it to say, however, that whereas the suffering of the Russians was greater, the Mennonites suffered a much greater psychological shock, and the setback from where they formerly were to where the criminal rampage left them was also much greater. The Russian people had a long tradition of suffering and they took the war and revolution more or less as a matter of course. For the Mennonites, who were prosperous, orderly and religious, peacefully living in their Garden Spot for more than a hundred years, the terror that descended upon them came as a sudden violent shock as though a wild beast, or Satan himself had entered their beautiful Garden of Eden. In a few horror-filled years their peaceful and prosperous colonies that had been built up through industry and planning over five generations had suddenly been stripped to the bone and driven to the brink of despair. It was a shock and devastation from which the colonies never recovered. The problem that now confronted them was survival of those that were left.

Reflections and an Assessment

From the foregoing history of the Mennonite settlements in Russia, especially the Molotschna colony, I might have left the unqualified impression that the Mennonites were solely possessed of virtues they were industrious, hard working, resourceful, intelligent, practically devoid of crime and had many other qualities and characteristics that are to be admired. All of the above may be true, and probably are, but the fact that they did not survive in their own "Garden Spot" would point to the conclusion that they were also possessed of some glaring weaknesses and shortcomings, and this too, is obviously true. One of Nature's Eternal Laws regarding life on this Planet Earth is the law of Survival of the Species. Whereas the Mennonites were outstandingly proficient in the reproduction and expansion of their own kind, they failed to protect their precious progeny, at least in their prime habitat in the Molotschna colony and in Russia as a whole. The once beautiful Molotschna colony is now a shambles and a desolation, as it has been for some seventy years, and it will never again return to its once pristine glory.

In assessing these virtues and weaknesses, those of us who have survived should learn some important lessons, not only for ourselves, but also to pass on to our future progeny, and the White Race in general. For example, let us remember that the evil forces which destroyed the Mennonites in Russia were not a local occurrence, nor is this by any means the end of the story. No, indeed, the evil forces are still as malevolent and malignant today as they were seventy years ago, or a century ago, or a thousand years before that. I will directly come to the point: the Jewish network destroyed the Mennonites deliberately, wantonly, and viciously. They also destroyed the Romanov dynasty and murdered the Czar and his family. They wreaked chaos and anarchy on the Russian people and deliberately murdered approximately 30 million Russians, selectively targeting the White Russian segment in particular, in line with their long-standing policy of destroying the White Race - Always Kill the Best First. They used the same tactics against the French Nation a hundred and thirty years earlier when they guillotined the nobility and leaders of that beleaguered nation. They have used the same modus operandi against the German people for the last four hundred years, and vehemently so in the last fifty years. They are employing the same tactics and principles in their deliberate program of destroying the White Race in America, in Europe and wherever the White Race resides in the world. Let me remind you it is happening today.

So the first thing for which I criticize the Mennonite people, my people, is that they have never even tried to identify, or confront the real enemy that wantonly destroyed them. In fact, in their misdirected religious zeal they are the first and foremost to worship, praise and eulogize the so-called "Israelites" as "God's Chosen people". In this respect they are congenitally blind and continue to be so more than ever to this very day.

Concomitantly with this charge, secondly I criticize them for their insane infatuation with Jewish Christianity, the spooks in the sky swindle, the most vicious fraud and brain scrambler of all time. Thirdly, with this obsession about Jewish Christianity also goes the fatal flaw of adhering to the worst of the bad advice dispensed in the "Sermon on the Mount", namely of religiously refusing to take up arms and defend their own people, their loved ones, their family and their own kind. Practically no creature in Nature will descend to such stupidity. This is my third criticism of the Mennonites.

In one respect, however, I will come to the defense of the Mennonites, namely, that this is not due to cowardice or lack of courage, since I am firmly convinced that the Mennonites are as courageous as are their Dutch and/or German ancestors, or as courageous as any of the best of them. But it is their religious insanity or stubbornness that has induced them to cling to their fatal tenet of non-resistance, or charitably turning the other cheek throughout the centuries, a most fatal flaw Indeed.

The fourth criticism I have of the Mennonites is their geographic rootlessness, similar to that of the Jews and the Gypsies, settling in any and every country of the world, but never having tried to build a state of their own. In their defense I want to further point out that unlike the Jews and the Gypsies, the Mennonites are and always have been a highly industrious and productive people. They never had any need to be a parasite (like the Jews), or steal their way across the land (like the Gypsies). No, indeed, they have always more than paid their way, always been highly self- sufficient and extraordinarily capable of organizing and governing themselves. Of course, it can be argued that had they been allowed to expand peacefully, say in Prussia, or even in Russia, by the sheer rate of their multiplication they would over a period of a few centuries have populated and occupied the whole country. But this never happened, and again this can be blamed on the flaw in their religious dogma that they were deliberately determined to take no steps to protect themselves and insure their own survival.

These are the main criticisms I have. There are a few others of a minor and petty nature that I have observed, which are not necessarily peculiar to the Mennonites, but shared by mankind in general, although the Mennonites may perhaps possess them to a slightly larger degree. Some of these characteristics are the petty, backbiting way in which they, in their aggressiveness to get ahead, will criticize those who do rise above the crowd. I have noticed that many (not all) will gossip about and malign those who have done better than themselves, at the same time disparage and laugh at those who have done worse. This is a petty Catch-22, a no win attitude, and one to which I cannot point with pride.

Having made the above criticisms reluctantly, let me reiterate that in weighing the pluses and minuses, I believe the Mennonites are a great people, that they have excellent genes, physically, mentally and morally. If the whole world were populated with their kind it would be a far superior world to the scum-infested, Jew-ridden world of today, a world that is rapidly bursting at the seams with environmental pollution and exploding mud peoples.

What I would like to see the Mennonite people of today, what is left of them, do, is this: For one thing, I would hope that they would forget their spooks in the sky nonsense once and for all and instead pay closer attention to their biological origins and values, which are excellent. I would hope that they would join with the rest of the White Race, that they would get their priorities straight and help get the parasitic Jewish pestilence that destroyed their Garden of Eden in Russia off the backs of mankind. In short, if they would exert the same zeal, dedication, aggressiveness and industry as they have wasted on their fraudulent Jew-instigated religious beliefs, and convert all that great talent and energy toward building a Whiter and Brighter World, we might yet Indeed have a Garden of Eden on Planet Earth In totality.

Against the Evil Tide - 01

Milestone Zero: My Mennonite Heritage

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Against the Evil Tide - 02

Milestone One: Personal Memories of Russia Nostalgic and Otherwise

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Although along with my family, I lived through most of those horror filled years (I was born in February of 1918) it seems my memories began to register when I was about three years old, the year 1921. By this time the Bolshevik regime had pretty well demolished the opposition and they were now consolidating their tyranny. This did not mean that the terror was over. Far from it. In fact, it was the beginning of a long and endless nightmare that persists to this very day. Not that all my recollections of Russia are negative. I have many memories that I treasure fondly and with a certain amount of nostalgia, and I will try to reconstruct what I can remember of my life between the ages of three and six, both the good and the bad.

We lived in the village of Rudnerweide in the Molotschna colony, at the south end of the village. We occupied a large, comfortable house. It was a long rectangular building with a tile roof, with the front half being our living quarters and the barn in the back half of the building. The yard, the garden and a beautiful orchard comfortably took in a few acres of land. Also on this same yard was another building, a large blacksmith shop that normally held the farm machinery and other equipment. During the years in question it housed two other families (at different times) that we had taken in, families that were even more destitute than we were.

The one family was named Henry Dyck. I remember that one day we learned that Mrs. Dyck had died during the middle of the night and we were all awakened to hear the report. My dad helped prepare her body and build the coffin for the ensuing funeral. They had a little daughter that was my age. Her name was Heidi. I was to see her again later when they had moved to another village.

The other family that followed was by the name of Driediger. They had a flock of uncouth kids whom we did not like.

Probably my earliest memory is during the famine years of 1921-22. I remember having half slice of dark bread rationed to each of us for dinner and my dad telling us that that was all there was going to be dished out for this evening meal. I remember looking around and smiling, and thinking - this isn't really so bad! I don't really remember feeling hungry, although I am sure that there were many times when we were. The fact is many people died of starvation during the famine years of 1921 and 1922, including some Mennonites, but many more millions were Russians. To be exact, five million Russians died of hunger in the Ukraine alone during those two years.

This was no accident of nature, nor the result of drought, nor any other natural catastrophe. We must remember that the Ukraine, where we lived, was the largest, most fertile farming area in Europe, and was, in fact commonly known as the breadbasket of the continent. Then why did five million people die of starvation in the Ukraine during those two miserable years?

The answer is simple. It was planned that way. True, the devastation of the previous three years of looting, murders, and anarchy had left the farms pretty much of a disaster area, but still, the countryside could and would easily have produced enough to have fed its population. When the Bolsheviks took over, one of their insane programs that was number one on the list was to take the land away from the people (as well as all their other property) and "collectivize" the farms. This they did with a vengeance. The first step in doing so was to break the "Kulaks", the land owning farmers, by either starving them to death, or shooting them, or shipping them off to Siberia. The Bolsheviks employed all these methods with a great deal of zeal and vigor. Many who resisted were shot. On a number of occasions they would round up a "herd" of Kulaks, force them into cattle cars, lock the doors and ship them a thousand miles up the line towards Siberia, then throw them out into the wilderness and let them fend for themselves, if they could.

But even more effective was starving them to death on their home premises. The Communist commissars would come around to every household, to every farmer, and demand tribute, mostly grain, and levy every bushel, every cupful they could find on the premises after a thorough search, and cart it off. Thus, the farmers were left without food and without seed grains for next year's crop. In charge of this vicious program in the Ukraine was that sinister slant-eyed Asiatic criminal by the name of Joseph Stalin, who was to later become the most cruel, the most bloodthirsty murderer in all the annals of history. The result was five million Ukrainians died of a deliberately planned famine, and among them, many Mennonites. During those years cats, dogs, the carcasses of dead horses were eaten in order to stay alive. The only reason our family did survive is because my dad had the foresight to see what was coming and took great pains to hide, to bury and otherwise squirrel away enough grains to feed his family of seven.

Many of the more gruesome events that happened while I was still an infant too young to recall, were related to me by my parents and by my two brothers and sisters, all of which were older than I, and I will try to relate them first.

The civil war that raged back and forth in the Ukraine was very much evident in the Molotschna colony, and in our own village of Rudnerweide, and in fact in our own back yard (as well as in the front yard). Mother tells me of the family cowering in the middle hall of the house (evidently presumed to be the most protected place) while cannon balls and grenades were exploding and flying all about us. One cannon ball took off the top corner gable of our house, a visible scar that I still remember. Another cut a swath through the beams of our barn. Another missile exploded in an outside pigpen and killed several of our pigs.

Dad and mother also tell of criminal gangs of Makhnovskys riding into our village on horseback, sometimes as many as 60 In a gang, and ransacking our house (and that of others). They tell me of my dad being taken into the basement at gunpoint and being lined up against the wall to be shot, but evidently he was spared at the last minute. My mother has also told me a number of times that when I was nine months old I contracted a terrible illness, typhoid or scarlet fever, I don't know which. While I was in this state and near death (my mother tells me) the Red armies and the White armies were battling it out in our yard, shot and shell were flying, with the family again all huddled in the hallway of the house.

By 1923 this ferocity of the Bolshevik regime abated somewhat and they began to realize that unless they allowed the people some latitude in the rebuilding of their broken-down farms and economy, not only might the economy of the whole country collapse, but their newly inaugurated tyranny might very well collapse along with it. So things began to improve. We planted crops of grain again and we planted our vegetable gardens. We restored our badly mauled orchards. We were able to eat full, nourishing meals again. I remember the family bringing in wagonloads of sheaves from the field, the wagon being drawn by a mixed team of one horse and one cow.

I also remember a pleasant scene of sitting in the middle of a beautiful large vegetable garden. I was sitting in the middle of some high rows of something, hiding out for the fun of it, while my sister was calling for me, wondering where I was. Another time in the same lush garden setting, I was sitting on the ground, eating raw sweet peas, when that same sister ambushed me from the back and scared the daylights out of me.

Here are a number of other trivial Incidents, random vignettes of memory, that still linger after sixty-five years. They happened somewhere between the age of three and six.

My first attendance at Sunday school when I was three or four. This was my introduction to "heaven" and the spook world beyond "up there" somewhere. I still remember the hymn we sang, and like an oft-repeated commercial jingle, it still circulates through my mind from time to time, demonstrating the effectiveness of mind indoctrination at an early age. It was in German, of course, and the words went like this:

Der Himmel steht often
Hertz weiss du warum?
Well Jesus gekaemft und geblutet Darum.
Translation: (The) heaven stands open.
Heart, do you know why?
Because Jesus battled and bled
That's why.

The picture my young but then still unpolluted mind conceived of "heaven" was the attic of a small room or cabin, and the opening that I pictured was like that of an open crawl hole.

Playing around in the large orchard that was part of our estate. Climbing around in the large fruit trees - apple, cherry, peach and others. Eating too many ripe cherries one afternoon and ending up with a bad case of diarrhea.

Sitting on a warm tile hearth bench in the evening with my mother and older sisters, Sarah and Katie, singing religious hymns. One in particular still reverberates in my mind:

Muss Ich gehen mit lehren haenden
Muss Ich so vor Jesu stehen.
Kann Ihm kelne Garben bringen
Kelne einzige Garbe nicht.

Translation: Must I go with empty hands
Must I so stand before Jesus.
Can bring him no sheaves
Not a single sheaf even.

My mother was especially delighted with the verve and the loudness I put into those songs, and I remember her praising me for it. By 1923 and 1924 we began receiving some food packages from America, through what agency I have no idea. Anyway, I remember receiving sugar, and I would put a spoonful in my mouth and let it slowly dissolve into a syrup before swallowing. Unlike the cherries, too much sugar produced the opposite results ~ constipation. The only other food I remember receiving from America was thick slices of pork fat, although I am sure there was more. Speaking of America, it became even then a promised land that some day we must go to. In talking about it with my mother it also introduced to me the concept of a round world with a large body of water between us and America. As I questioned my mother further about this round world surrounded by water, my understanding was that It was flat, of course, like a platter, with a circle of water around the perimeter and a straight cut of water across the middle of the plate, dividing the world into two portions of land, one of which was us, and the other was America. We had a brass cup in the kitchen that had a handle and had been made from a cut-off artillery shell. One evening it was standing on a counter, half-full, and I was thirsty. I drank it all before I realized it was not water, but kerosene. I became very sick and had a terrible headache. My dad, in order to comfort me and cheer me up, further aggravated the situation by foolishly giving me a tablespoon full of sugar. As can be expected, it did not help any, but somehow I survived the night.

At one time we had two horses in our barn (as well as some other animals and poultry). Since everybody was in need, thievery was rampant in the land, not perpetrated by the Mennonites but by itinerant Russians, some of which worked in the village, others that roamed the countryside and figured the Mennonite villages were good pickings. This was not exactly a new phenomena. The Russian peasants had a long history of thievery, and the poverty and chaos that followed the revolution only intensified it. Anyway, one morning we woke up and found one of our horses had been spirited away during the night. This was, of course, a severe loss, since horses were direly needed to work the land and extremely hard to get. How we managed to acquire two horses after having been repeatedly ransacked by the Makhnovskys and Bolshevik bandits, I can't say. As an object lesson of locking the barn door after the horse was stolen, my dad installed a three-inch iron pipe with a lock on it across the stall in which the other horse was kept, and punctiliously kept it locked every night thereafter.

I remember playing with the neighbor children across the street. The name of the family was Friesen, and they had several children that were of a similar age to that of my sisters. I also remember seeing my sometime friend Heidi Dyck again. Her family had lived in our former blacksmith shop for a while until moving to another village.

The raising of winter wheat had been a mainstay crop among the Mennonite farmers since the early 1850's, and when the pandemonium described earlier somewhat subsided, evidently the villagers, including my father, managed to get the crops going again, to what level, I don't know, but I do remember that we had a one-cylinder diesel engine that was mounted on a concrete base. My dad heated up the fire-plug with a blowtorch to get it going. It was coupled by a heavy drive belt to a still functioning threshing machine, all of which were housed in a machine shed attached to the side of the barn (not to be confused with the larger separate blacksmith shop which stood separately in the yard, and now housed some of our destitute friends). One harvest that I remember we brought home the sheaves from the field in a wagon pulled by a team that consisted of one horse and one cow, as mentioned earlier.

There was a large windmill that ground the wheat into flour located about a quarter of a mile west of the end of the village where we lived and I remember going there several times to have our wheat converted into flour. Evidently the harvest in 1923 and 1924, I don't know which, was more than we needed for our own use. I remember my dad sacking the remaining wheat and taking It off to market In Berdlansk, a Russian city. This was located about 50 miles distant and the trip and return required several days. My dad and evidently a neighbor undertook this trip while the weather was favorable and I had the privilege of being taken along. We slept out in the open during the nights and ate what victuals we had packed and brought along.

I remember particularly as we approached the city of Berdlansk, which lay on the shore of the Sea of Azov, that we had to descend a particularly steep dirt road. Evidently, my dad had anticipated and prepared for this emergency. The rear wheels of the wagon were locked with a long pole across the wagon, and then steel shoes, like short skis were attached to the stationary wheels. The horses then leisurely pulled the wagon down the hill, with the rear wheels skidding in the dirt.

Evidently dad and the family had made up their minds we were going to emigrate and get out of Russia. I presume the money he received from the sale of the wheat went towards saving up for the fares and anticipated travel expenses. The years of 1923 and 1924 had been much better than all the anarchy and bloodshed that preceded them and evidently goods were again something that could be bartered or sold for money. In May of 1924 we had a grand auction in our yard and sold everything we owned - farm, machinery, cattle and horses. I have no idea how much dad received for what was left of his former estate, but I presume that most of the goods were bought by our Mennonite friends, neighbors and relatives.

By June, 1924, evidently the passports, visas, railroad and steamship fares were all in order, and we had a grand, tear-wrenching farewell party. It was held in the large blacksmith shop that stood by itself and where some of our refugee friends had temporarily lived. The place was all decked out, large amounts of cakes, sandwiches and tea were served. All our friends and neighbors from the village of Rudnerweide were there as well as our many relatives from nearby villages. The preachers from the Mennonite church were there and gave tear-wrenching sermons followed by an emotional singing of "God be with you till we meet again." We all cried and memories of it still bring tears to my eyes.

Next day we gathered all of our few personal possessions, which consisted of a small assortment of suitcases, boxes and a small old-fashioned trunk. All were loaded onto a low buckboard. Including ourselves, and our neighbor from across the street, Franz Friesen, drove us to Marlawohl, where our grandmother lived. As we crossed the little bridge on the Sisikulak River we cast our eyes on the village of Rudnerweide for the last time. As we passed over a slight rise and out of sight, my mother and two sisters broke Into fitful spasms of crying. We all knew that this part of our life was behind us and would never return. What the future held was extremely uncertain. Our destination was Mexico, somewhere in Mexico.

We stayed in Mariawohl over night. Then Uncle Heinrich, dad's brother, on another vehicle, drove us to Lichtenau, where we boarded our first train, the beginning of a long and momentous Journey.

Against the Evil Tide - 02

Milestone One: Personal Memories of Russia   Nostalgic and Otherwise

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Against the Evil Tide - 03

Milestone Two: Trans Europe and Across the Atlantic

Although leaving our native village was an emotional experience, I looked forward to the trip into the unknown as an exciting adventure, something to look forward to with a great deal of anticipation. By and large, that is the way it turned out, and even my dad and my older brothers Korni, 16, and Henry, 18, got caught up into the spirit of adventure with the attitude that they were enrolled in a grand world tour, the like of which they would probably have only once in a lifetime.

As we embarked on the train and first headed for Moscow, every sight for me was new. In fact, until then, I had never even seen a train before. We traveled day and night, and had to make several transfers. The family was organized and everybody had the responsibility of certain pieces of luggage to carry on and off, to guard and make sure they were not stolen or lost. I remember that Korni had the small wooden trunk with the rounded top as his charge. It had in it some of our basic books such as the family photo album, the big family bible, and other valuable books. It was relatively heavy. As we sat on station platforms with our mound of goods waiting for the next train connection to come along, I remember getting awfully sleepy and tired, especially when such transfers occurred during the middle of the night, which they often did.

But by and large, the trip from beginning to end (it took about three months to finally reach a destination in Mexico that we had not even determined when we started) was an exciting, invigorating and tremendously educational experience. One of the things that immediately attracted my attention as we rolled along in the various trains was the number of vendors hawking their wares to the transient customers. I was especially attracted to the candy vendors. I discovered that for one kopek, the equivalent of a cent, I could buy a good-sized piece of candy. As a result, my sisters and I continuously badgered our dad to give us a kopek. This he did sparingly, since his resources were extremely limited and the unforeseen exigencies of future requirements almost unlimited.

I want to digress here a moment and point out that we, like practically all refugees and émigrés fleeing Russia at that time, were traveling on an extremely meager, in fact, shoestring budget. But I also want to point with pride that unlike many emigrants who followed us, we did not travel on borrowed funds. My dad paid for the entire trip with funds he had precariously scraped together from the sale of our belongings in Russia, and any other moneys he had managed to squirrel away prior to the auction. How he managed to do so, I have no idea, but I do know he was a frugal man. Many other Mennonites who left in the next few succeeding years did so with the help of several charitable Mennonite organizations in Canada, and also the United States. But most active in helping some 20,000 Mennonite refugees make the transfer to Canada were such agencies as the Mennonite Central Committee, the Mennonite Colonization Association of North America, the Mennonite Migration Aid Society, Mennonite Immigration Bureau, Canada Mennonite Board of Colonization and a number of others. A most active leader in this respect was the Rev. David Toews, out of Rosthern, Sask. but he was not alone. There were hundreds, even thousands of others who contributed heavily in time and money to help their Mennonite brethren make the transition out of Bolshevik-ridden Russia. Such emigrants had funds loaned to them by these charitable organizations, which the émigrés promised to repay later when they became settled and able to repay, which sometimes took many years, sometimes even 15 or 20 years. But that is another story that is well chronicled in several other books, such as "The Mennonite Exodus" by Frank H. Epp, and several others.

As an aside, most Mennonites paid off these charitable loans as soon as they got back on their feet, and had the money with which to do so. However, there were some (a few) ungrateful ingrates who repudiated these debts and refused to repay a charitable loan and much travel assistance that had enabled them to transfer out of the Bolshevik slave-labor concentration camp that was, and still is, Communist Russia.

But to resume our odyssey across Europe.

We finally arrived in Moscow where we were delayed for some days, perhaps weeks. My memory regarding such stopovers for matters of arranging fares, itineraries or immigration papers, or whatever, is not too clear. I know that they occurred again and again in different cities as we wound our way across the continent and even in Cuba and in Mexico and that we were holed up in a variety and number of places, but how long each stopover was I couldn't say.

Our stay in Moscow was most interesting. I remember staying in a bedroom that had vertically striped wallpaper, a novelty, and what was even more remarkable was that the room had an electric light bulb hanging down from the ceiling, which wonder of wonders, could be turned on and off by means of a switch on the wall. Also, I discovered ice cream. The vendors on the streets were selling ice cream, much as we know it today, but not in cones but in equivalent canoe shaped cookie crusts. I thought they were delicious, and continued to bug my poor dad with repeated requests for more.

Our next stop, as I recall, was Riga, Latvia, about which I remember very little. Then on to Berlin, Germany, where we were again laid up for some time. I also recall stopping over in Cologne, and dad and the boys going to visit the sites. One of these was the famous Cologne Cathedral with its twin 550-foot steeples. I remember them bringing back a small silver medallion as a memento, with the cathedral engraved on both sides.

Our next stop was Paris, where again much sightseeing was done by dad and the boys, visiting the Eiffel tower and other famous landmarks. Usually, my mother and my sisters did not join in on these sightseeing tours, which were always strictly on foot, and my dad took me along on most of them.

From Paris we took the train to our embarkation point across the Atlantic. We boarded a Royal Mall Lines steamship at LaRochelle, France, and for the first time laid eyes on the vast Atlantic. We not only laid eyes on it, we soon became thoroughly familiar with the vagaries of the ocean. As I recall, all seven of us shared a rather small cabin, which had an electric light bulb dangling from the ceiling and a small washbasin to one side.

We were not too many hours afloat, undulating over the rolling waves, when some of the family began to get seasick. The only ones, in fact, that did not on the entire trip were my dad and I. However, even on the first day out as I watched one of my sisters throw up into the washbasin. It turned my stomach, and I immediately followed suit.

There evidently was no switch in the cabin with which to turn off the electric light bulb that was dangling from the ceiling. When it came time for everyone to go to sleep that pesky light remained on. My dad obviously was not familiar enough with these new-fangled lighting systems to know that the light could be extinguished by unscrewing the bulb, so he did the next best thing. He hung a handkerchief or a towel around it.

We were all eating in the ship's dining room and really felt like we were living high on the hog. Evidently a bottle of wine was served gratis with each dinner meal, and everybody consumed it with relish. Even I, as a six-year-old boy, received a small bottle and drank it in lieu of water. Apparently it was very light in alcoholic content, since I don't remember myself or any other members feeling any drastic effects from it.

The ship was also the occasion when I viewed black Africans for the first time. They were in the cooking department of the kitchen and I remember my dad going to the kitchen each morning and requesting hot milk for us kids to drink in the cabin before we went down for breakfast. I also remember being introduced to oranges, pineapples and bananas for the first time.

One day my oldest brother Henry and I were wandering about on deck and I happened to trip over a tangle of steel cable. As I fell I hit my forehead on the sharp edge of a rim on a ventilation funnel. These are no longer used on modern ships, but at that time these funnels could be rotated to face into the wind and funnel fresh air into the quarters below. Anyway, I fell and not only cut a nasty gash in my forehead, but it temporarily knocked me unconscious, and I bled profusely. Henry picked me up and carried me to the ship's dispensary where a doctor wrapped my head in several layers of bandages. Apparently he was not the most skilled in his profession, for when he secured the end of the wrappings with a safety pin he partially ran the pin through my scalp. I still carry a scar on my forehead from that particular mishap.

On route across the ocean we saw much marine life. We saw any number of flying fish, practically anytime of day. We saw a few whales in the distance, one at a time. One day we saw two large dolphins swimming at top speed just ahead of the bow, keeping time with the speed of the ship for several miles.

After more than a week we finally dropped anchor in Havana harbor. Havana at that time evidently didn't have any piers to accommodate ocean steamships. There was much hustle and bustle when we landed. Any number of vendors were hawking their wares in little boats below to the potential customers on a deck at least 30 feet above. This consisted of such as oranges, beads and various other tourist items. After much gesticulating and haggling, the money would be lowered in a basket at the end of a rope and the items brought up in the same basket.

Finally, the time came to disembark. Again much noise, confusion and bedlam. Each passenger and their belongings were transferred to shore by means of small tenders rowed by one lone native Cuban. This apparently was not part of the overall fare and the natives had to be paid extra for their individual transfer services. Since the tenders were small, our family had to go in two different boats. After a long descent down a precarious ladder on the ship's side, my mother, two sisters and myself and a number of our belongings were loaded into one tender. We were rowed to the shore about a quarter of a mile away where we unloaded ourselves and our belongings onto a beach. Dad and the two boys with the bulk of the rest of our kit and caboodle were to take off in another little boat, but not until after a considerable delay. As I remember there was some argument about something, since there were a limited number of these small tenders and hundreds of passengers waiting to be transferred. Anyway, our little group of four arrived safely on shore, arranged our belongings into a compact pile. We sat on them to make sure they were not hoisted by some of the light-fingered thieves who always infest such places. So there we sat and sat, waiting for the major male contingent to arrive. Time went on and my mother was getting increasingly nervous with all the uncouth dark-skinned characters milling about the waterfront, some of them black as the ace of spades. Finally as darkness began to descend my dad and two brothers arrived and we all breathed a sigh of relief when we found each other. This was not easy since there were a lot of people on that beach and the people and piles of their belongings were strewn over a large area.

We settled into some boarding house or other in Havana and stayed there for at least two weeks, awaiting further information as to where to go next. Finally we embarked on another steamer, smaller than the Royal Mall, and headed for the port of Vera Cruz, Mexico.

From there we took a train and headed north all the way up to the city of Chihuahua. There we were accommodated into some kind of a compound that had a high adobe wall around a large courtyard and a number of flat-roofed adobe buildings inside. Here we stayed for about three weeks, until the end of August, where my dad met with some other Mennonite families and representatives, trying to decide where to go next.

Against the Evil Tide - 03

Milestone Two: Trans Europe and Across the Atlantic

Next Back Home

Against the Evil Tide - 04

Milestone Three: Wild Sojourn in Mexico

Next Back Home

Where we went next was a small railroad station named Rosario, about 50 miles up the tracks from Chihuahua. When I say station, I use the word loosely, since it did not have a station house, but only a water tower for locomotives to replenish their supply, a long dirty white shack right next to the railroad track where two or three Mexican families lived with their little muchachos. It was their business to maintain the railroad tracks. Besides these two modest structures there was a five-room flat roofed adobe building which was set a little further back from the tracks. It was presently empty (except for a few mice, rats and insects) and ready and waiting to accommodate us.

Now five rooms of any building would have seemed like a mansion to us then, but we were not alone. Four other Mennonite families were now in our group and were sharing the building with us. That divided up very nicely, exactly one adobe room per family. The others, too, were émigrés from our part of the Ukraine. One family was the Heinrich Gosens, who had two boys, one about my age, one a year or two older. Another was the Gerhard Klassens, no relation, who also had some kids. Then there were the two Dickman families, John Sr., and John Jr. The older Dickman and his wife also had grown children other than John, and the latter and his wife had young children of their own.

So there we were, one big happy family settled into a small adobe building with five rooms, none of which were even so much as plastered either inside or out. The floor was plain dusty dirt, and I have no idea how long it had been uninhabited, or who had ever lived in it. There was no electricity, no plumbing, and I don't remember that the whole building even had any windows. This little hacienda sat about 50 yards removed from the railroad tracks in the middle of a huge Mexican rancho that was owned by a Spaniard by the name of Saenz. About half a mile away was the main headquarters of the ranch which consisted of large complexes of perhaps 20 or so adobe buildings, where the ranch workers lived. Six other Mennonite families moved into similar adobe buildings at the ranch, so with eleven families we now had the makings of a potential Mennonite colony.

Senor Saenz did not live at the ranch. He lived in a small city by the name of San Antonio, probably 15 or 20 miles removed. Every so often he would breeze over in his Model T to inspect his ranch holdings and I suppose also to collect rent from us, although I don't remember anybody ever paying any rent. Anyway, he was a nice looking young man, and he would usually let us kids get into his car with him and take us for a ride. He looked a lot like the Cisco Kid and he always wore a gun belt studded with live ammunition and a real gun in the holster.

In fact, all the Mexican men wore guns, even the lowly railroad maintenance workers who lived next door in the dirty white shack by the railroad track. This was 1924, and "The Revolution" which had occurred just recently, supposedly was over, but not quite. Banditos still roamed the hills and the countryside in a number of places. Other than that, the country was placid, very placid, very somnambulant. A four or five car freight train would rumble into Rosario practically every day, stop to take on water and rumble on its way. One of the most interesting things we kids observed about this freight train, which we would go to meet every day, was that one box car was always loaded with soldiers, a dozen or so, in full uniform and armed to the teeth. One of the rules that was in force then and persists to this day was that any banditos caught in the act were not brought to trial in a court of law. Justice was swift and final. They were shot on the spot.

Evidently the plans of this small group of Mennonite families was to obtain some land and start the nucleus of a small settlement. How do you go about starting a settlement without funds or resources?

Well, the first thing we did was to plaster the dirt floor with a mixture of cow dung and adobe, reinforced with straw. The next thing my dad did was to go to the nearest small town (by railroad) and find jobs for my two older brothers, Korni, 16, and Henry, 18. In this they were successful and Henry obtained a job as a clerk in a hardware store, and Korni elsewhere, the exact nature of which escapes me. Both boys learned Spanish fast, but poor Korni soon came down with a severe case of rheumatic fever and had to be brought back to the hacienda in Rosario. Where my dad got the idea of plastering Korni's skin with massive doses of iodine I have no idea, but that is the treatment the poor fellow received and I remember him moaning and groaning as the brown stuff was applied daily until he began to look like a brown zombie.

After a while Korni recovered, although he was later plagued with arthritis for the rest of his life. Henry, who was a strapping young fellow, six foot, very personable and good looking, soon caught the eye of a Spanish banker by the name of Melendez and was promoted to an excellent job in the bank. This job he maintained for the rest of our stay in Mexico, and even beyond, for when the rest of the family decided to migrate to Canada a year and a half later, Henry stayed with his job for another five months or so, until we were better established in our new setting.

I have very little knowledge of how our finances were being managed at this time, but I am sure they were extremely meager, and that Henry's salary was a mainstay in helping pay for the necessities of getting our part of the "new colony" started. I remember dad taking the train to San Antonio every so often and coming back with a canvas bag loaded with silver pesos. How often and how much I have no idea, but I do remember that when he returned, I would rush to meet him at the station and volunteer to carry the canvas bag, and I recall that it was as heavy as a six or seven year old boy could comfortably carry.

We initially rented some acreage from the rancho estate and planted beans and potatoes. We were soon in possession of a wagon and two teams of oxen to pull said wagon, although it only took one team to do the job. The oxen were attached to the wagon by means of a yoke that was strapped across their forehead and horns (they had long horns) and the yoke attached to the front end of the wagon tongue. The oxen were then urged to move forward or turn by means of a skillfully manipulated prod, in conjunction with voice commands. It worked out pretty well, except one red ox by the name of Colorado was somewhat rebellious and one day in a fit of pique he threw my 14 year old sister Sarah up into the air with his long horns, in the finest tradition of the Spanish bullring. Poor Sarah! She came down with a bloodied nose and a few other bruises, but otherwise was not too badly hurt and soon recovered.

The little "colony" of eleven families were resourceful and energetic. They soon got themselves organized to live like civilized people should, and being Mennonites, one of the first things they did was to organize Sunday school and church services. Herr Gosen was the preacher and each Sunday services were held in his quarters (one room) of the adobe hacienda in which we all lived. Also, after a while regular schooling was organized to be held in a room in one of the buildings at the ranch headquarters about half a mile away. Our next-door neighbor, Gerhard Klassen, was the schoolteacher and I remember my first introduction to the ABC's and numbers. All this was taught in German and the word "Pferd" (horse) sticks in my memory. However, since we continually associated with the Mexicans at the railroad station and elsewhere, we all, especially us younger kids, soon became quite proficient in conversational Spanish.

We had left Russia in June and by the time we finally arrived at our destination in Rosario it was the beginning of September, the height of the tropical hot and rainy season. The mornings would be clear, becoming hotter as noon approached. Then by early afternoon almost as if by the clock the sky would suddenly cloud up and in a matter of minutes a heavy downpour would ensue. Since we had not yet been acclimated to the tropics and since sanitary conditions were less than ideal we were all very much vulnerable to yellow fever. I don't remember who all in our family came down with it, but my two sisters and I all three contracted it at the same time, and I will never forget it. We were all lying in the same bed. Just burning up with fever, and air conditioning had not yet been discovered, at least not in Mexico. I was so hot and so miserable I thought surely I would die. But once again, I pulled through and so did everyone else in the small colony, including my mother, who also had a terribly severe siege of it.

After the tropical rainy season was over, and we were more or less acclimated, the fall and winter weather was most pleasant and invigorating. It was dry and sunny and a more delightful environment could hardly be wished for. We were beginning to enjoy Mexico, or at least some of us were.

The Mennonites soon got their act together and went about it in earnest to get their infant "colony" started. The rancho where we lived was not too unlike the Serengeti plain of Africa. It was flat, an abundance of grass in a fertile plain surrounded by mountains on a perimeter about ten miles distant. Plenty of animals roamed the plains, some of which were only semi-wild - such as burros, mules, cattle, and a number of totally wild, such as rabbits and lots of rattlesnakes. About half a mile to the North of us was a valley, a flat depression through which ran a gentle stream and when the rainy season was on became a not so gentle turbulent river. The Mennonite group in Rosario purchased a tract of land in this valley, in which they planned to build the nucleus of their settlement and start farming on their own.

My dad was as enterprising as any of them. Soon he with the help of his progeny were pouring large adobe bricks into wooden moulds and letting them bake in the sun. As soon as the bricks were ready, he started building an adobe house. He and Korni also hand dug a well and we were about to be on our way to having an adobe hacienda of our own in the valley.

The house was never finished. As 1925 got under way, there began a serious reappraisal by the eleven families of our little Mennonite "colony", each for different reasons, but before I go into that phase let me first recapitulate a few other random "vignettes of memory" of that period.

I was coming back to the hacienda by myself from the little adobe "home we were building in the valley and walking through some tall grass. Suddenly I found myself running rapidly about a foot above the ground as I glimpsed the head of a big snake moving toward my bare ankles.

Speaking of snakes, we all became real familiar with rattlesnakes, and of course tried to kill them at every opportunity. Even I as a six or seven year old kid soon became quite adept at stoning them to death and keeping my distance at the same time.

As I described earlier, there were a number of ranch animals roaming the grasslands near our door. Sometimes we (kids) would approach a tame burro and get on its back. Once with the help of some of the other kids I ventured to get on the back of a larger animal, a mule, that was meandering by. The mule took issue with this kind of tomfoolery. It promptly bucked me off, and then, to add injury to insult, it kicked me in the ribs while I was down.

One day my dad, my sister, and some others drove to a pass in the mountains where there were some fruit orchards, apples, I believe. The trip was made in our flat bed wagon which was drawn by oxen and took all day.

Another time my dad, my brother and I drove to a town by the name of LaJunta to look at some oxen or horses, I don't know which. I was very much impressed by the skill with which these Mexican vaqueros were able to handle a riata. I remember this one fellow roping first one horn, then the other, of a longhorn steer about fifteen feet away, each time giving the rope a gentle flip to disengage, then, repeat the exhibition.

Every so often Henry would come home for the weekend from his bank teller s job in San Antonio (it was a minor trip on the directly connecting railroad). By this time the boys had bought themselves a neat looking shotgun, of which they were rather proud. We would sometimes go hunting over the plains which abounded with rabbits and wild foul, all of which were a welcome addition to our Sunday dinners.

One night my dad and another neighbor or two borrowed the railroad handcar that the maintenance workers had available, and by means of hand power propelled ourselves to a neighboring small town where we visited a few other Mennonite families. We returned late that same night.

As I stated a little earlier, the eleven families that started out to build a nucleus of a Mennonite colony in Mexico had serious second thoughts about the whole prospect, and not all for the same reasons. My mother was unhappy about the whole environment and considered the country too wild, too uncivilized and too raw. In the meantime, things had been stirring with our other relatives back in Russia, and three of dad's family, the Abe Klassens, the John Klassens, and the Jacob Wienses were emigrating from Russia to Herschel, Saskatchewan, in Canada. So evidently were a considerable contingent of other Mennonites that were not related to us, to form a larger community of about 40 families in the Herschel area. Also the idea that the next generation (we children) would be engulfed by a sea of half civilized Mexicans did not present a very cheerful prospect to our parents. Whatever the reasons, what with contacts and arrangements with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, we decided to once again emigrate to a less primitive and more congenial environment. Personally, I enjoyed Mexico, I liked the warm climate, I liked the wide-open spaces and I enjoyed the raw adventurous setting.

In any case, by December of 1925 we had again packed our few essentials in a few suitcases and boarded the train north, to again face an uncertain future and a strange environment. Henry alone remained behind in the relatively good job he had at the bank in San Antonio to join us later if things worked out. He was now nineteen.

Against the Evil Tide - 05

Milestone Four: North to Saskatchewan

Next Back Home

Our trip from the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, to the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, progressed much more rapidly than had our long drawn out Journey from Russia a year and a half earlier. We left Rosario by the end of November 1925 and arrived in Herschel in the middle of a cold December. I remember no long stopovers on this trans-America trip, but mainly I recall different railroad stations and their comparatively lavish Interiors, or so they seemed tome.

This was during the period before Christmas and I also remember a whole raft of novel toys that were on display at the stores in the larger railroad stations. Of these, one toy in particular stands out in my mind, and that was a mechanical monkey on a string. When the string was pulled tight the monkey climbed up the string, working its arms and legs in a coordinated action. When the string was slackened, the monkey climbed down.

Our itinerary took us through the cities of El Paso, Dallas, Kansas City, Des Moines, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and others. We entered Canada at North Portal, Saskatchewan, passed through Regina on the way to Herschel.

The little village of Herschel owed its existence to the rich wheat farming country that surrounded it. It had been founded about a dozen years before we arrived there and its main architectural impressiveness at the time were four towering grain elevators, all painted a red rust color. A little later these increased to five. In 1925 Herschel did not yet have an electrical distribution system in this village of about 200, but a year or two later it did install its own crude system. A gasoline-powered generator could be heard chugging away at any part of the village, day or night, and it was soon the pride of the village, and everybody soon had electric lights.

We arrived there one dark evening in the middle of December. The snow lay heavily on the ground and it was miserably cold. I don't remember ever seeing snow before, not in the southern Ukraine, nor in Mexico and when I did meet up with it in Canada I was not favorably impressed. That attitude remained with me until I left Canada for California nearly twenty years later, when I swore that If I never saw any snow again It would be too soon.

To meet us at the railroad station in a box sled was my Uncle Jacob Wiens and Uncle John Klassen, and some other relatives. (For those who are not familiar with farm equipment, let me explain that a box sled is the winter version of the box wagon used when the snow is gone. In either case a sturdy open box about three feet high, four feet wide and about ten feet long, sits either on a set of wagon wheels or on a two-piece set of heavy sled runners.)

It had been arranged that we would move in with Uncle Jacob (Wiens) and Aunt Margaret, the latter being dad's youngest sister. There were six of us, (brother Henry still stayed in Mexico) and what with their two children, the ten of us now shared a two room house, a small clapboard structure that had been thrown together in haste a few months previously. The Wienses were themselves pioneering out here and barely getting on their feet.

Arriving in Herschel earlier in 1925 were a contingent of several Mennonite families, all of whom had gone there directly from our area of Russia, about a year after we had left. Several more followed in 1926, until soon there were a total of at least 40 families. Three of these families were of dad's immediate relatives, namely Abe Klassen and his brood, Uncle John and his family, and Uncle Jacob, his wife Margaret (dad's sister) and their two infants. By the time we arrived there, one of these groups had already negotiated a massive real estate transaction, having purchased five sections of land from a wealthy estate owner by the name of Lamborne. These holdings were not contiguous, but scattered over a considerable area all north of the village of Herschel. Some of these parcels had dwellings on them, some did not, but all were now under cultivation. These five sections were divided up among ten families into farms of 320 acres each. The participants in this particular deal were as follows: (a) Jacob J. Wiens, an Elder of the Church, and three of his sons, Jacob J. Wiens, Jr., an uncle of mine, and his brothers. Peter and Ben, accounting for four half sections; Bernhard Wiens and George Wiens, both of whom were brothers to the Elder Jacob Wiens, taking two more parcels. Uncle Abraham Klassen taking another; Henry Wiens, another. Two more participants outside of the Wiens and Klassen clans took the remaining two farms. They were the Jake Isaacs and the Peter Sawatsky families, to make a total of ten. These might be called the original First Families of the Herschel Mennonite settlement. They were soon followed by many more, including my dad's family, in 1926.

By and large, the farms they purchased were already operating concerns of choice fertile land, level, and extremely well adapted to wheat farming. Besides the main Lamborne purchase, the Mennonites also acquired any number of smaller pieces from other individuals, so that every family soon had a farm of their own, but not all of them as yet had houses on them.

The Mennonites are a social and cooperative clan, and in one way or another they all practiced racial teamwork. They accommodated each other, some by several families moving into the limited housing available, and also by other means. There was a large white two-story structure that had been the headquarters of the Lamborne establishment. Several of the new Mennonite families moved into it. There were also several large red barns, machine sheds, and an array of farm equipment that were on the main premises and also went with the deal. In order to house the other families of the Lamborne group, these enterprising people soon built a row of temporary clapboard dwellings such as the one we now shared with the Wienses. (This was pure charity. As a latecomer we were not a party then or later, in the Lamborne purchase.)

So there we were, in the middle of the winter, in the middle of Saskatchewan. To me it was not only a culture shock but even more a climatic shock, one for which neither we nor our inadequate clothing were prepared. What winter clothing we now possessed consisted mostly of hand-me-downs, given to us by some of the Canadian Mennonite organizations that were now highly active in not only helping refugee Mennonites make the trip out of Russia to Canada, but also providing advice, guidance and material necessities to the increasing flood of immigrants.

The rest of the Mennonite kids having arrived some six months earlier were already enrolled in the English speaking rural school that was situated a few miles away from our new colony. So my sister Katie, aged 12, and I, nearly 8, were swept along, practically the day after we arrived there, and also sent to the local country school which had the Indian name of Winona. Such country schools dotted the rural landscape all over Saskatchewan and normally had one room, one teacher, a pot bellied stove in the corner and about 20 to 30 pupils, grades 1 to 8.

The weather was miserably cold, and the days were short in the middle of December. Each morning while it was still dark a box-sled (also known as bob-sled) would load up all the kids from the headquarters farm. We were then packed on the floor of the sled and covered with blankets as best as possible. Then, with a team of horses equipped with sleigh bells, off went the bobsled full of Wienses, Klassens, Sawatskys, Warkentins, etc. It would saunter into the Winona schoolyard to unload its charge. Then at about 3:30 P.M., when it was already getting dark it would again pick us up and transport us back to the farm over the fields of frozen ice and knee deep snow. At this point I wished we would have stayed In Mexico.

Undoubtedly, this was one of the low points in my young life. Our clothing consisted mainly of hand-me-downs and cast-offs, none of it suited for the cold weather with which we now were confronted. My shoes were totally unsuited for the cold weather and my feet were often frostbitten. It was inevitable that I soon developed chilblains in my toes and heels.

To add to my woes, because of the poor diet, I also contracted intestinal worms, which aggravated me no end. I was given some strong purgative that finally killed the worms. It almost killed me, too.

Not only was I cold, worm-ridden and miserable, but my initiation to the Canadian schools was a severe trial. Because I was different, could not speak English, and was a foreigner, some of the older native bullyboys picked on me and slapped me around. They also thought it was good sport to goad me into a fight with kids my own size. This usually culminated into a wrestling match rather than a fistfight. I soon learned the art of wrestling and could usually beat any of the kids my size.

Our teacher, as I recall, was a blonde spinster named Miss Cratcher, aged about 35. I remember one of the older bachelor farmers by the name of Russell Gardiner, who was well to do, used to come calling on her while school was still in session. A year or so later, as I recall, they were married.

We are still in the middle of December, and preparations for the Christmas program, which was the highlight of the rural area, were in full swing. Christmas finally came and went, but he cold winter went on and on.

Meanwhile, at the two room, two family cabin, our poor beleaguered parents were doing their best to put on some kind of display of Christmas festivities, play Santa Claus and scrape together a few makeshift presents to celebrate this important festival In our new setting. It was this very Christmas that it began to dawn on me that the whole Santa Claus story was a hoax. Meanwhile my oldest brother Henry was still in good old warm Mexico, earning silver pesos. My oldest sister Sarah, now a big girl of 14, soon found a job as maid with the Crulkshank family, who owned the one and only General Store in Herschel. They were nice people, and Sarah was quite happy with them, learning to speak English all the while. Dad and brother Korni were working around the main farm (there were a million things to do to prepare for spring planting) and attending a small class at night, learning the English language. Soon brother Korni obtained a job as farm hand with a well to do farmer named Bill Shirk. So in one way or another we were all learning English, getting acclimated and getting into the swing of it.

I should add that the other 40 families that had arrived in Herschel at about this time were all more or less as poor and destitute as we were, but they were all industrious, energetic and hardworking. I don't know how they managed to purchase these large tracts of really choice farmland, but I am sure that it was on long drawn out installment payments, with little or no money down. The sellers recognized the buyers for the hardworking, trustworthy people they were, that they would make a go of it and would pay off the mortgage with the productivity of the land. In this the seller's judgment was sound and what with weather and wheat prices being favorable, they were soon in business, both the buyers and the sellers. I am sure that the Mennonite agencies previously mentioned also had a big hand in successfully negotiating these transactions and also standing good for the down payments.

In the meantime, my dad was still without a farm and without means. During the winter of 1926 he, with the help of the agencies, and relatives (I presume) was scouting around to buy a farm in the Herschel area. About four miles south of Herschel such a farm was found and he negotiated a transaction with a farmer by the name of Tillinghast. The latter had originally homesteaded the place in 1910, had built a decent two story house, a large red barn with an enormous hayloft, a tool shed, fences in place, and accumulated an assemblage of farm machinery. In short, he offered a going concern, a ready-made farm. We bought the place, 640 acres, half a mile wide and two miles long.

Again I don't know what the terms of the transaction were, but the price was $25.00 per acre. Not all of this land was under cultivation. There was quite a bit of pasture land, some of it already fenced, and the north 320 acres still had quite an acreage of prairie land that could and would be "broken" (ploughed) after the rocks had been dug out and picked off of it. (Although it was good farm land, not quite as rich as that north of Herschel, this rock picking was an ongoing process, as I later discovered.) So the papers were drawn up, with the mortgage and the interest rates duly stipulated, and the payments to be made each fall in the amount of half the net proceeds from the sale of the grain produced, mostly wheat. We moved onto the premises in the spring of 1926. The weather was now beautiful, and everybody, including me, was happy as a lark, to be living in a good-sized, full-fledged home of our own, and in the possession of land, lots of land.

Other Mennonite families, which consisted of Sawatskys, Warkentins, Schroeders, Ungers, Penners, Krahns, Eliases, Toewses, and some others whose names I do not remember, negotiated individual deals of their own and settled on the farms north of Herschel. To their eternal credit, every able-bodied family soon had a farm of their own, and a decent house to live in. By 1930 Bill Loewen, a Mennonite, opened up his own grocery store in Herschel, the third such store In town.

Also during this time more Mennonite families moved in south of Herschel where we were. Some of these families were more Wienses, the Lenzmans, the Pletts, the Wedlers, the Bergs, the Dycks, and the Gerzes. About eight miles further to the south of us was the little village of Fiske, where a further scattering of Mennonite families settled, two of which as I remember were the Zacharlases and the Martins. Soon a substantial and prosperous Mennonite community was firmly established in the Herschel-Fiske area, all of which socialized and communed with each other.

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Milestone Five: Wheat Farming on the Prairies

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As to how we acquired a herd of cows, a number of horses, farm machinery and a whole plethora of other equipment and accoutrements completely escapes me. In fact, I know very little about the negotiations that led to acquiring the farm itself. Be that as it may, we were soon off and running, planting crops of wheat, oats, flax, etc., and managed to get the crops in on time during that first spring of 1926, and harvest them that fall.

Sister Katie and I were soon enrolled in the local school with another Indian name, a dumpy little one room, one teacher school about two and a half miles distant across open prairie. It was named Oskaloosa, School District No. 3702. I will never forget it, especially since eleven years later, during the depression, I was to be its teacher for two years, under most adverse conditions. But more about that phase later.

During the spring and fall we walked the two and one- half miles across the pastures and open prairie, carrying our books and lunch palls. The latter, as I remember, were not the kind you buy in a store, but empty five-pound corn syrup containers. For some reason, when it came to registering us at school my dad added year to my age and Katie's, evidently to get us into a higher grade sooner. Anyway, I started in the first grade and Katie in the second. This extra year stayed with me in the school registration for several years. It continued to bug me no end, until I finally questioned the pointlessness of this little lie and corrected it myself.

We found this little school with about 20 country kids had a perpetual contingent of at least five niggers, sometimes more, all of which were part of the Lafayette family. They lived on a farm about half a mile south of the school. Louie Lafayette, the old man, who could trace his ancestry back to the slavery days, (or so he claimed) had sired a brood of ten, and as a result there were always Lafayettes attending Oskaloosa S.D. No. 3702, coming and going. Even as the older members were exiting, a new brood of younger ones were coming in, including two illegitimate little bastards from two of the older girls.

One thing about these niggers, they were outstanding athletes when it came to running and jumping. When the Herschel, and also the larger Rosetown area, began having "Field Days" (around 1928) as they were called, the school of Oskaloosa invariably won "the Shield" and the silver plaques that were riveted to it. These Field Days were contests in a series of athletic events similar to the Olympics, in which points were awarded for first, second and third place in each event, with the school with the most points being awarded the coveted shield. For years Oskaloosa carried away the prize for country schools, and the Lafayette brood was the main difference, although through the competitiveness engendered, the White kids were giving an excellent account of themselves also. Especially outstanding was this black fellow by the name of Earl, who was about my age, and in the second grade when I started in the first.

During the cold winter months the first few years Katie and I were driven to school in a small cutter, by either my brother Korni or my dad. This continued to be a miserable process, as had the trips to Winona when we first arrived. After about two years, we were considered old enough to drive to school ourselves. There was a barn on the schoolyard where the horses were stabled while the rest of us were in school. Regardless of our transportation, getting to school during the winter continued to be a cold, miserable experience, with no ameliorating Influences.

Soon I began to latch onto the system that was going on in the class room (such as it was) and within months I was upped a grade to where I was now in the same class as Earl. Soon I was in a grade ahead of him. Also, I began to learn the score in playing baseball, the prime game of the school. I remember the first year I was introduced to the game. When I was designated as a fielder, I asked one of the boys, Roy Moore by name, "Roy, supposing the ball comes my way and I catch it, what do I do with it next?" By 1928 and 1929 I could field, play first base, and bat home runs as well as anybody, and was. In fact, usually the pitcher for whatever side I played on. Also, I began to have a very active part in the Field Day athletic events. Whereas I was never a fast runner, I excelled in the jump, both the high jump and the broad jump, and even in an event called hop, skip and jump, a three-stage stint, when that event was on the schedule.

To get back to the farm. I was always glad when June arrived and school was out (somewhere in the middle of June). About a quarter of a mile below the hill from the barn there was a beautiful lake about a mile long, and the southerly fourth of that lake extended into our pasture. It was a favorite nesting rookery for wild ducks, with probably a dozen different species being represented.

That first spring, in 1926, I found a set of three 2 x 8 boards on the shore, nailed together like a raft, having a length of about twelve feet. I soon latched onto these and tried rafting on the lake. Since It was only a little over two feet wide, I had a problem staying balanced on it and several times I tipped over into the water. Then I got the idea of nailing two six foot boards crosswise and about four feet apart towards the middle of the raft, connecting the outside ends with another set of boards. Thus I now had a set of what was equivalent to outriggers and my balancing problem was solved. Next I nailed a wooden apple crate in the middle of the raft for a seat and I had a raft that I could now either pole or paddle all over the lake. Many were the hours and the days I spent rafting on that lake during the lazy summer days of those early years on the farm.

Meanwhile dad and the two older boys were getting the farm into high gear. At first everything was done by horse. We "broke" new prairie land with a John Deere plough having the one-share plough pulled by four horses. The cultivated land was seeded (to wheat, oats, etc.), with a drill pulled by four horses. The land was tilled with a "disc" pulled by horses. The wheat and oat crops were harvested by a binder (McCormick-Deering) pulled by four horses. The grain was threshed by a neighbor's threshing machine (on a per diem basis) and the wheat hauled to the town elevator four miles away by box wagon pulled by a team of two horses. We traveled by buggy or democrat (buckboard) drawn by horses.

Within a year or so the farm soon became mechanized. Soon we bought a J.I. Case tractor, 12-20 horsepower, (12 on the drawbar, 20 on the pulley). We bought a threshing machine of our own. We bought "one-way" cultivators drawn by tractor, which ploughed the land and seeded the grain in the same once-over operation. Any new prairie land was now broken with a gang plough drawn by tractor.

By 1928, only two years after starting from scratch, farming in a completely new country, dad and the boys were prospering. Not only were they now highly mechanized with tractor, threshing machine and a host of other tractor-oriented machinery, but they were expanding their land holdings. We first bought an adjoining 320 acres to add to the 640 we already owned, then bought another 320 adjoining it. Then we bought another farm that was about three miles west of Herschel and about six miles from the home farm.

Not only did we buy powered machinery but as early as 1927 we bought a big old (1920?) Studebaker touring car. Since the car was old and our experience with cars very new, considerable trouble ensued. It did not have a self-starter, of course, and had to be hand cranked. Sometimes after the boys got tired trying to repeatedly crank it without getting it started, we sometimes employed a different means. Since our yard sloped towards the barn and then past the barn was all downhill towards the lake, we would sometimes push it into the downhill position and let her roll towards the lake. Then when it developed good momentum, we would throw it into gear and hope it would start. Most of the time it did, but when it did not we would hitch a team of horses to it and pull it back up the hill and try the procedure all over again.

The Studebaker served us less than a year, after which we traded it in for a Model T Ford, touring, of course. It did much better and we put a lot of country road miles on it. (There were no paved roads in the area in those days. The closest stretch of paved road was a piece eleven miles long leading into the city of Saskatoon from the west. But that was 100 miles distant.) The next car we bought was a blue 1929 Chevrolet Tudor coach, and we now felt we had the ultimate and were living high on the hog.

Regarding this additional farm we acquired west of Herschel, I remember in particular the summer of 1928. My brother Henry and I "batched" in the house on the premises for approximately two weeks while Henry was ploughing or discing the fields into shape, using our Case tractor. What stands out in my mind about that particular summer is that we had an unusually heavy crop of mosquitoes. They were so thick that if you slapped the rump of a horse pulling a wagon or whatever with the reins it would leave a heavy and visible imprint of dead mosquitoes. While Henry was driving the tractor that summer he wore a small white flour sack over his head, with only two small peep holes cut in it for visibility. Why this summer had such an unusually heavy proliferation of mosquitoes I do not know, but I suspect it was because we had a wet year.

About this time I remember several unusually violent thunderstorms with much lightning, heavy winds and even tornadoes sweeping across the countryside. I remember one especially bad storm that resembled the one depicted in the Wizard of Oz. Our two-story frame house was creaking and straining and we felt sure it would be blown away, as we all sought refuge in our basement. Not only were the winds especially violent, but the occasional gusts felt as if they were of tornado proportions. Along with this storm came massive bursts of hailstones. After it was all over, we discovered in the next few days that some barns and some houses in the area had indeed been ripped apart, and there were swaths cut through our wheat fields that had been devastated by hailstones.

In the meantime, the other Mennonite farmers and their families also prospered. Already as early as 1927 the Mennonite colony got together and built themselves a church about three miles north of Herschel, and is in use today, although none of the original farmers live there anymore, only a scattered few of their children and grandchildren. Be that as it may, the church became the center of all our social life, and the Mennonites developed a society and life style all their own. Not that they weren't friendly and on good terms with their English speaking neighbors. They were. I remember many a winter evening we would visit our neighbor Clinton Davis who lived on the other side of our lake. We would play dominoes or Lotto, and were on the best of terms. But, nevertheless, when it came down to prime-time socializing such as young peoples' parties, visiting families on Sunday afternoons, having dinners, marriages, etc., the Mennonites were a family unto themselves, and they preferred to keep it that way, much as did the Mennonites in Russia. The church remained the center of their social, religious and cultural life.

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Milestone Six: Achieving a Measure of Self-Confidence

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From the farming point of view, the years of 1927, 1928 and 1929 were a period of expanding success. The weather was favorable, the crops were good, and wheat prices were satisfactory. We worked hard, but the results were tangible and gratifying. The farming venture was profitable, we were expanding our land holdings, buying tractors, threshing machines, cars, and making substantial payments on our mortgage. In fact, for a family of new immigrants that started out in the spring of 1926 strictly from hunger, we were prospering very nicely, thank you.

By the fall of 1927 my sister Katie and I (together) were hauling wheat into the elevators by the wagonload. By 1928 we were each In charge of a team and wagon separately, hauling more wheat to the elevators than ever. In 1929, when I was 11, I even remember the price of wheat as indicated on the sales invoices we received from the elevator agent. It was, as I recall, around $1.33 per bushel of #l Hard Northern.

My progress at school was better than anticipated. My sister dropped out in the spring of 1929, while I had been skipping a grade every now and then. By the fall of 1929 I found myself in the sixth grade of Oskaloosa S.D. #3702. Being a one-room school with only about 20 kids, there happened to be a serious disparity of pupils per grade at that time. I was all alone in my grade and found the lessons a breeze. I had become proficient in arithmetic and spelling and felt quite comfortable in the usage of the English language. There was nobody in the seventh grade, but there were seven pupils in the eighth grade. Naturally, my teacher at that time, whose name was Miss Berger, had her hands full and was not keen in preparing lessons and teaching one lone sixth grader. Since I was getting along so well, after about a month and a half into the fall term, she asked me - how would I like to be promoted into the eighth grade? Did I think I could handle it? I said I wasn't sure, but I would be glad to give it a whirl. Without further ado I was promoted from the sixth into the eighth grade.

I was only eleven, and most of the other kids in the eighth grade were sixteen or seventeen. I remember one French gal whose name was Gabrielle Benjamin condescendingly saying to me, "You'll have to work like a nigger to keep up with us." Coincidentally, one of the Lafayette nigger girls was also in the eighth grade at that time.

Next June, 1930, we wrote our final exams in a government-supervised classroom in the Herschel High School. Each candidate's exam paper was then numbered without a name and then sent to Regina, the provincial capital, to be marked by impartial examiners so that no partiality was possible. It so happened that a few weeks later I received word from Regina that I had passed, and along with it in the envelope was my beautiful Eighth Grade Diploma. Of all the diplomas, certificates and degrees I have received since, none is as precious to me as that first Eighth Grade Diploma. Unfortunately, Gabrielle had not passed, nor had her black classmate, nor had two others. Out of a class of eight, only four of us had made it.

By the summer of 1930 I felt a surge of confidence I had never felt before. I could play baseball as well as anybody and had no trouble knowing what to do with the ball when it came my way. I had learned to skate and to ski and to swim. Most of all, mastering the eighth grade at age 12 when half of my 16 year old classmates had not, gave me a sense of mastery, the confidence that I had something on the ball, that I was smarter than the average kid.

I also found out that there was a penalty that went with success, something that would plague me as it has millions of others in a similar category. That discovery was this people hate to see someone else get ahead of them, and the non-achiever is jealous of the achiever. When I would make a 98 on a spelling test and some kid would make a 62, invariably the reaction would be, "You think you're smart, don't you? Well, you're not as smart as you think you are."

As I have learned since then. It is extremely hard to accommodate the jealous, and my attitude soon became to hell with them. Forty years later when I wrote my first book. Nature's Eternal Religion, I understood the situation a little better, and I stated a truth that unfortunately will always be with us. It is this. The inferior hate the superior. The dumb hate the intelligent. The blacks hate the Whites. The ugly hate the beautiful. The poor hate the rich. The unsuccessful hate the successful, and so on ad infinitum. In short, to be successful is to automatically create jealousy and animosity. That is the way of human nature, and nothing is going to change it in the foreseeable future.

By now the depression was beginning to set in in earnest. However, by the end of 1930 I had saved up $10 of my own and bought a second hand bicycle. It was really an oldie. The wheels had wooden rims. In fall I went back to Oskaloosa to take the ninth grade, albeit by correspondence course. There were four of us, and we sat in the same classroom with the other eight grades. The teacher did not teach us, but was available for consultation.

The winter of 1930-31 was unusually mild, with practically no snow on the ground - a very unusual occurrence in Saskatchewan and a harbinger of poor crops for the coming summer. My parents celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary, and I especially remember how warm the weather was that day in January 1931.

Getting back to the depression that was now upon us, I have already stated that I recall the good crop of 1929 and the favorable wheat price of $1.33 that year. I recall further that as I was hauling wheat to the elevators in 1930 the price had dropped to half of that, approximately 67 cents a bushel. By 1931 it was half of that again, approximately 32 or 33 cents a bushel, less than it cost to produce. Not only was the price abominable, but the droughts of the 1930's had begun, and the crops in the following years were extremely poor. What with the drought, the poor crops and the ridiculously low prices for our produce, we were in for a long siege of extremely hard times. The whole farming industry, which had seemed so rosy just a few years ago, now became a miserable back- breaking ordeal that promised nothing but bankruptcy and hardship. Farmers were going broke and even a little bit of spending money was extremely difficult to come by. What little cash we could scrape together was now supplemented by shipping a 5 gallon can of cream to a creamery about 100 miles away. We milked a number of cows and managed to ship about a can a week, for which we would receive a paltry 3 or 4 dollars. We also sold eggs to the local store, for which we would receive something like 5 cents a dozen.

However, we did not go hungry. We had chickens, ducks and geese. We had a large vegetable garden and grew a large plot of potatoes each year. We raised pigs, some of which we sold, and at least one of which we butchered for meat each fall. So we had plenty of eggs, milk, butter, vegetables, chicken and pork, and sometimes even beef. There was poverty, but no hunger such as we had experienced ten years earlier in Russia. Nevertheless, the drought and the bad crops continued, and we, too, were plagued with miserable dust storms and tumbleweeds rolling across the landscape, only to be caught up in the fences, then to be further fortified with dirt and topsoil from our suffering fields.

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Milestone Six: Achieving a Measure of Self-Confidence

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Milestone Seven: Rosthern and the German-English Academy

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By the summer of 1931 I had successfully completed the ninth grade, and had to make a decision as to where I wanted to enroll in the tenth grade, or if I wanted to continue at all. I was never too keen about schoolwork, and not very interested in doing homework. Whereas I did well in writing exams, I was not really a good student as such. However, I decided that farming wasn't exactly my dish either, and since I was only 13, I might as well finish high school. Where to go? Old Oskaloosa was out, since they didn't take tenth graders, even in correspondence classes.

During that summer a tall, slim young man by the name of Benno Toews visited the Herschel area to drum up support for the German-English Academy at Rosthern, Saskatchewan, a small Mennonite college located about 150 miles northeast of Herschel. At the age of 28, he had now been appointed as the new principal of that college. He also visited our farm and interested my dad in the benefits of sending his youngest son there in the coming session. It was a Mennonite sponsored boarding school and it promoted religion, the Mennonite ethic, as well as studies in the German language. The cost for tuition, room and board was $150.00 for the year (nine months). My dad was interested in my becoming more thoroughly indoctrinated in all three of those activities. He said he would have to give it some more consideration, since $150.00 was a lot of money in those days, and for us, hard to come by. Although my dad was a frugal man, he was generous to a fault when it came to supporting the church and/or any phase of the Mennonite cause.

One day towards the end of September 1931, my dad, brother Korni and I were picking rocks onto the flatbed of a wagon from off a summer-fallowed field, an occupational hazard that we pursued intermittently year after year when time allowed. This was another one of those farming activities that I liked even less than doing homework. In fact, much less. Anyway, we had been discussing the Rosthern prospect favorably for some time, and that morning while picking rocks, my dad and I suddenly decided bilaterally that I would go to Rosthern, In fact, why not leave that very afternoon? Why not, indeed?

We went back home, I packed my few things, and by 2:30 p.m. the three of us were in our blue 1929 Chevy coach on our way to Rosthern. We arrived there at 9:00 o'clock that night without any prior announcement. Benno Toews was glad to see us, and Anna, the school cook, fixed us a late supper. I was assigned a room in the dormitory, and having arrived a few days before the October 1 opening date, I was their first arrival. Dad and Korni stayed overnight, and after a congenial visit with Mr. Toews they left the next day.

The Rosthern German-English Academy was a small high-school college, grades 9 to 12 inclusive, that back in 1931 had an enrollment of perhaps 75 or 80 students. About half of them were local residents and the other half were from out of town and stayed in the two-story dormitory. It was co-educational, with the girls occupying the upper floor of the two-story building and the boys the ground floor. The kitchen and dining room were in the basement. Also included on this small campus was a two story red brick building, which held four classrooms, two upstairs, and two down.

The Rosthern G.E.A., as we called it, (it has now been renamed as the Rosthern Junior College) was founded in 1905. The father of Benno, the Rev. Bishop David Toews, was one of its early founders and undoubtedly its most ardent promoter, as he was the leader and guiding spirit in so many other Mennonite activities. The school was founded with the objective of fostering two basic objectives besides pursuing the regular academic studies. These two purposes were (a) to promote the Mennonite ethic and keep it alive by the additional study of the German language, and (b) to inculcate religion and the study of the Bible (from the Mennonite point of view) into the minds of the upcoming generations. So both German and religious courses were added to the regular curriculum, a cause that was warmly supported by my dad, and one of the main reasons he was willing to make the heavy financial sacrifice.

I believe that it is fitting that I give a brief resume here about the interesting life of the Rev. Bishop David Toews, who, like Johann Cornies in Russia almost a century earlier, was another one of those most outstanding Mennonite leaders. His services to the Mennonite people, in both Canada and Russia, were monumental. Toews was a great man by any standard in terms of life-long dedication, hard work and sacrifice for a cause he believed in - namely, the welfare of the Mennonite people. In this respect he has been neither surpassed, nor even equaled in this century. Besides being a founder of the Rosthern G.E.A. he was the prime mover and head of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization from its founding in 1922 until shortly before his death in 1947. Toews and the board he headed were largely instrumental in helping the emigration and transfer of thousands of Mennonite refugees from Communist Russia to Canada during the peak years of the 1920's.

* * * * *

David Toews was born February 9, 1870, at Lysanderhoeh near the Volga River in Russia. He was one of 14 children of Jakob Toews, a minister, who had come to Russia in 1869 from Marlenburger-Werder in Prussia. Although he was elected minister in 1864 to serve a Prussian congregation, the elder Toews migrated to Russia to escape military service for his sons, four of whom were born in Prussia.

However, in 1870 Russia also threatened the traditional privileges of the Mennonites, as I have noted before. Some Mennonites decided to avoid this threat by migrating to North America, and there was a considerable movement to Canada and the United States during this period. Another group felt that security and freedom lay in the east, not west. One such man was Claasz Epp, a dynamic and magnetic leader, who had come from Prussia with his parents in 1853. Epp was fervently promoting the idea that the Millennium was at hand, that Christ was about to return and it was the beholden duty of the Mennonites to prepare a Bergungsort (a place of refuge) according to the Book of Revelations. Epp managed to attract a small group of fanatic followers about him, and in 1880 he managed to lead his small group to Turkestan in Central Asia, where they would meet the Lord and inaugurate the millennium. Jacob Toews and his family was one of the victims of this sorry and tragic hallucination, and joined the Epp expedition. Toews and others sold their choice farms in Russia very cheaply, and in August of 1880 began their projected two-year trek with covered wagons and horses. David was then ten years old.

The expedition was well organized. David went along on the trek as a barefoot boy running alongside the wagons. They encountered many hardships accidents, sickness, hunger, thirst, rain, frost, storms, thunder and lightning. For every incident the resourceful leader had a well sounding biblical explanation, drawing heavily on the Revelations, and like the biblical John, he claimed to have a direct hotline to the Almighty. Cholera, smallpox and typhus took a heavy toll of both children and adults, but the wagons kept rolling on towards the Bergungsort, wherever that was, a place none of them had ever seen. David, too, came down with smallpox and fever. But the fanatic Epp kept pushing onwards, becoming more disoriented by the day, and by now imagining himself to be the prophet Elias. Tensions mounted and a Molotschna group split off and left Epp to form their own settlement. But the Toews family continued to stick with Epp on his onward push.

Finally this remnant group arrived at Khiva and settled on a tributary of the Amu Darya River, where this deranged visionary imagined to discover the millennium amply stocked with grape vines and fig trees. This was now October of 1882, two years and two months after this ill-fated expedition had left their comfortable homes and farms in the Molotschna. So there they now were, deep in the wilds of Central Asia.

The little settlement was soon beset with a myriad of problems. The first crop was a failure because of locusts and drought. Robber bands harassed them and one of the men was killed. Turkmen stole their feed. Finally some of the settlers, including two of the Toews boys, acquired guns and two Cossacks were hired as watchmen. This staved off any further attacks for the time being.

Their visionary leader, Claasz Epp, became more unbalanced and more tyrannical as time went on. He now designated himself as a brother of Jesus and a fourth member of the Trinity. He attacked anyone who doubted him. Finally after 20 months of this ordeal at the Khiva, a number of families, among them the Toews family, had had enough. They admitted the folly and insanity of it all, and on April 17, 1883, they and 20 families began their return trip to wherever that might take them. They did not follow the same route back, but the hardships and hazards were the same, if not worse. They wandered through deserts, nearly died of thirst, endured unforeseen accidents. The Toews family went directly to the Alt Samara Mennonite settlement, where Mother Toews had a brother and sister. Here they sold their horses and equipment, what was left of them. They made preparations to immigrate to the United States.

After overcoming many problems, the Toews family arrived in Kansas on October 14, 1884. David was now 14 years old. Of the 14 children in the Toews family, eight were still with them, six having died in childhood. The family settled on a farm at Newton, Kansas.

David began his schooling at age 14 and learned the English language. He graduated at Halstead College and became a teacher in 1893. After some years of teaching, he went to Winnipeg, Manitoba, under the auspices of an old friend, H.H. Ewert. Here he attended Wesley College and the Normal School, now becoming a fully qualified teacher. He taught school near Winkler, Manitoba.

In 1898 he went to the frontier regions of Saskatchewan, then not yet a province of Canada. He taught at Tiefengrund for three years, and again at Elgenhelm for a similar period. (These towns are in the Rosthern area.)

In 1900 he married Margaret Friesen who had arrived from Prussia with her parents five years earlier. In 1905 they moved to Rosthern, which was to remain their permanent home. Their marriage was blessed with eight children.

In 1904 David Toews became one of the founding fathers of the private German-English Academy. He was one of its first teachers and became its principal in 1905, which post he held until 1920, and he remained chairman of the board until 1944. His efforts in promoting the school, helping raise finances and steering its course were prodigious. He manifested an unusual capacity for work and had tremendous amounts of energy.

But his life was filled with a large number of other activities, too numerous to list here. In 1914 he was elected chairman of the Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada. He became a much sought after preacher and filled many other roles in promoting the cause of the Mennonites in Canada, and in a larger sense, in Russia, and on a worldwide basis. His biggest role, however, was when at the age of 52 (1922) he became chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. It was a role into which he submerged himself with total dedication and energy and it was the main obsession to which he devoted himself for the rest of his life. Although thousands of other dedicated Mennonites participated in this mighty cause, David Toews was undoubtedly the mainspring in helping 20,000 Mennonites emigrate from Russia to Canada during the peak period of 1923 to 1930, but his work and efforts continued long after. I devote this much space to the story of Bishop Toews for two major reasons, namely, he was one of those outstanding Mennonite leaders who richly deserve the recognition, and secondly, he deeply touched the course of my life and that of my family, as he did of thousands of others.

I can say unequivocally that had it not been for David Toews, the Klassen family would never have made the move from out of Russia, and I would, of course, not have been attending the Rosthern German-English Academy at the beginning of October 1931.

* * * * *

After I was assigned a room on the ground floor of the dormitory, I quickly surveyed the situation and the lay of the landscape. As activities and classes began, I found that I was not only the youngest member of the school, but also the smallest. At 13 I was only five foot one. Although there were some other kids in the ninth grade that were 13 and 14, even the youngest was at least a month older, and the smallest at least an inch taller. Most of the students were between 16 and 20, and since the membership also included a number of recently arrived Mennonite immigrants from Russia, some of them were even considerably older. These included some who had perhaps already finished high school back in the old country or even taught school. Several of the latter students were even in their middle or late twenties. I also discovered there were two kinds of Mennonites. There were those who were descendants of the major migrations of the 1870's and 80's, and were native born. Then there were those of us who had come as a flood during the 1920's and were trying to get our bearings in the new land. There were large settlements of the old-line Mennonites around Rosthern, Hague and the surrounding area. The native born would sometimes refer to us newcomers as "the dumb Russlanders", but it was all in a friendly way.

Things started off pretty well. The month of October was mild and pleasant as far as the weather went. We played quite a lot of softball, at which I was fully adept. We had a kind of Field Day in which I participated in the high jump and the broad jump. I was soon introduced to the game of tennis. The school had two dirt courts, which area was converted into an ice skating rink during the winter.

Tennis soon became my main sporting preoccupation. I immediately took to it like a duck takes to water and it has continued to be my best game ever since. The school furnished the balls and some dilapidated tennis racquets. However, I did not even own any tennis shoes, so I improvised by wearing rubbers over my leather shoes in order to prevent slippage and also to protect the dirt surface of the court. So while most of the boys and girls were interested in each other and in dating, I played tennis. By the end of October, I became fairly good at it. The following spring, when the warm weather returned and the ice rink was converted back to tennis courts again, I was again its most ardent activist.

Unfortunately, because of my age, I missed out on the most popular game on the campus, namely the romance and dating game. As I mentioned before, the school was co-educational, and most of the students were sixteen or older. The boys in the dormitory were on the first floor, the girls on the second. We all ate in a common dining room in the basement, the boys at one set of tables, the girls at another. As can be expected, there was a lot of romancing, a lot of dating. There was even some hanky-panky, although since the school had the semblance of a religious atmosphere (not too heavy) most of the boys and girls were nice, clean, wholesome kids of good moral fiber, and I would say that the standards observed were certainly much higher than they are in today's liberal and sex-oriented society and colleges.

But there were exceptions. My roommate was a tall, handsome, irresponsible, daredevil type of fellow. His name was Lindsey Wiebe and he was from Weyburn, Saskatchewan. At 19 he very much resembled a young Clint Eastwood. Although smoking by the men and older boys was permitted, (but not in the buildings) drinking was strictly verboten, on the campus or even up town. Lindsey was in the same tenth grade as I was, but he was on the wild side and not a good student. Anyway, after the second term, and after we had finished our Easter exams, he and two of his drinking buddies, one by the name of Menno Unruh, 21, and the other by the name of Jakle Funk, 17, decided to celebrate. They went up town and got stinking drunk and committed some other outrageous public spectacles. Our teacher of German, music and religion, was a certain Rev. Franz Thiessen who had been a teacher back in Russia, and was more of the religious, old school type. Rev. Thiessen took umbrage at their scandalous behavior, and claimed they had given the school a bad name and had insulted the whole student body. He insisted that since they had done the latter, they should publicly apologize before the whole student body, or be expelled. Menno and Jakle complied, and remained for the remainder of the third term Lindsey did not, and he was indeed duly expelled. I was without a roommate for the rest of the term.

After a mild October a severe winter suddenly set in and things were extremely cold. The tennis courts were duly converted into a skating rink. I had received a pair of skates for Christmas about a year or two earlier and had an opportunity to learn to use them on the wide-open expanses of the frozen lake that lay below our barn. I had also played hockey a number of times on the lake. So when the skating and hockey season started I joined in wholeheartedly, and even skated with girls, as did the bigger boys. I also played hockey whenever such practice was in session which happened several times a week. When the

G.E.A. team played the regular Rosthern High School in the downtown rink, I was one of the G.E.A. team players.

When the Christmas holidays arrived, I went back home to visit, but for some reason disembarked at Fiske, instead of Herschel. Since I had to change train connection at Saskatoon, and stay some place overnight, Benno Toews, the principal, was concerned about my plight, and phoned his friend the Rev. J.J. Thiessen, who picked me up at the station and allowed me to sleep in his home overnight.

The Rev. Thiessen, who was also born in Russia, was a dynamic young man of 38 in 1931, and he already had played a major role in the Mennonite drama by that time, as he was to do even more so during the remainder of his long productive life. He held a number of prominent positions in the promotion of the Mennonite cause, and shortly after my meeting him at the end of 1931 he became head of the Rosenort Mennonite Church In Saskatoon, a church I attended sporadically during my Normal School and college years between 1935 and 1942. I was again to meet the Rev. Thiessen in 1971 when my wife and I visited Canada. By that time he was an elderly man of 78, still head of his church and soon ready to retire.

Meeting me at the station at 9 o'clock on a cold blustery night at Fiske was my brother Korni on horseback, in tow of a spare horse that was to take me and my bundle back home to the farm about eight miles away. The ride was long and cold and the horse I rode was skinny and without even a saddle. When we got home in the wee hours of the morning I was cold, tired and my rear end was sore from riding on the spine of a skinny horse. However, I was glad to visit with my family again and enjoy Christmas together.

Back to Rosthern and the boarding school. The dormitory had electricity, but it had no indoor plumbing and the outhouse was some distance away. To get to the latter we had to climb over a high snow bank most of the winter. We had to do our own laundry in some makeshift setup by the furnace in the basement of the schoolhouse, which was about 100 feet removed from the dormitory. Behind the furnace also there was some kind of a claptrap shower arrangement that was most inadequate. I somehow arranged to do my laundry every other Saturday, and to take an inconvenient shower every other Saturday in between, whether I needed it or not. I picked up the latter joke from my father-in-law who used to own a sheep ranch in Colorado. He loved to tell about one of his Mexican sheepherders who used to take a bath every spring, whether he needed it or not.)

Although I did not like homework, I somehow always managed fairly good grades. The other two teachers we had besides Benno Toews, the principal, were Arnold Friesen, a young man of 23 from Hague, Saskatchewan, and the Rev. Franz Thiessen, already mentioned earlier. Being the youngest in the school, I was somewhat conspicuous for the fact that I was one of the brighter kids in the tenth grade, and usually near the top of the class, despite my lack of interest in homework. Benno Toews and I had sort of a special relationship, a running sort of love and hate relationship, trying to best each other at every opportunity. I would ask questions that would throw a monkey wrench into his lectures and he would try to put me down in a good-humored way. Once, when he was going on about the Ice Age and the glaciers pushing on down towards the southern part of Canada, I asked him, what made the glaciers move? I had him stumped for a while, and then he came out with the age-old alibi and cop-out "The Ways of the Lord are mysterious..." Another time while teaching geometry, he fervently assured us that the total degrees of every triangle always added up to 180 degrees, and he challenged anyone to draw one that didn't. I raised my hand and volunteered. Okay, come up to the board and show us. I drew a regular triangle, and then designated two of the angles as outside angles. This got a laugh from the class as Benno pooh-poohed my illustrious demonstration.

We had any number of activities going and the nine months I spent at the G.E.A. was one of my better years. The Rev. Thiessen not only taught religion, German and music, but he also led the choir, meetings of which we had several times a week, and in which I participated. We sang such hymns as "There's a Church In the Valley In the Wildwood", "Rock of Ages", and any number of other pieces in four-part harmony. Most of the Mennonite students were excellent singers, although I wasn't one of them. I still sang Soprano, experimenting and trying to find the secret code (I thought there was one) of how to sing Alto or Tenor or Bass. Anyway, one day the Rev. Thiessen stood beside me as we were singing and said he was trying to detect a growl in the choir and wondered if I was the source. After listening for a while he observed that I growled like a bear. "Du Brurnst Wie Ein Baer", he concluded.

Before Christmas the school put on a play and I played the part of a rebellious kid who complained the teacher had cruelly beaten him, and the kid raised a ruckus about the affair. Evidently I played my part well, because even the critical Rev. Thiessen complimented me on it. Another time in our English class, we all had to prepare and give a speech on any subject of our choice. My subject was "The Country vs. The City" In which I extolled the virtues of country living, why I don't know. We then had a vote from our classmates as to who gave the best speech. I had no preconceived notions, and to my surprise whereas most kids received two or three votes (there weren't that many votes to go around) I received 12, by far the most. That made me sit up and take notice. Maybe I should become a politician?

I was glad when the winter was over and spring came. Again the ice rink was converted back to tennis courts and now I took up the game in earnest. By the end of June, I was in prime shape.

Finally, the end of the year exams. I came in second in my class, only slightly behind a certain Mr. Hildebrand, who was 23 years old, and had been through high school in Russia, also taught school. I left the school at the end of June with high confidence in myself and even somewhat on the cocky side. During the last day there I even had the gall to smoke a cigarette at a time I knew Benno Toews would see me, more as a token of open defiance than any desire to smoke. After all, I had already graduated. What could he possibly do to me now?

Against the Evil Tide - 08

Milestone Seven: Rosthern and the German-English Academy

Next Back Home

Against the Evil Tide - 09

Milestone Eight: Becoming Career Conscious

When I returned from Rosthern to Herschel I had a sort of letdown feeling. Getting back to the farm seemed so anti-climactic. It was not unlike the sentiment expressed in the post-World War I ditty about "How are you going to keep them down on the farm after they've seen gay Paree?" Rosthern was no gay Paree, but I was fourteen and some of the adolescent rebelliousness and independence was beginning to surface, characteristics that I already perhaps had more of to start with than the average kid.

It was a matter of getting back into the routine of farming chores and work, and Christ knows, when you live on the farm there is no end to what can be done and must be done. There were cows to milk, fields to cultivate, potatoes to plant and to dig up later, there were rows and rows of garden vegetables to hoe, fences to mend and rocks to pick off the fields.

But one of the most essential jobs I performed that summer of 1932, as I had a few summers before and would a few summers thereafter was that of herding our some two dozen head of cows and cattle. As I noted previously, not only did the depression set in financially, but so also did the lean years of drought. Since we were now actually more dependent on our livestock for our meager cash income, we tended to increase our herd. But the large pasture field that adjoined the barn, and even combined with the planted alfalfa field, were not enough during the drought to support our relatively small herd of cows, steers, heifers and calves. In order to sustain all these cattle my dad had me take them out on some "public" lands nearby, some unused ravines and prairie hills that were anywhere from one to three miles removed from our own farm. So there I would be on horseback (no saddle) taking these cows out in the morning and bringing them back in the late afternoon. This I would do three or four days a week over a period of several summers during the dry years of the depression.

Then come fall, from the time I was 12 until I was 17 when the crops were ripe and cut with the binder, I would be out in the fields "stocking", along with some hired laborers when additional help was needed. For the uninitiated to the western wheat fields, stocking consisted of setting up sheaves in nicely structured piles, with heads up and the cut ends on the ground. This was a necessary procedure in order to keep the grain in the heads from getting too wet on the ground and either sprouting or getting moldy, or both. The sheaves would stand in stocks for the period of time between when the crop was cut and when it would be picked up to be threshed. This could be a matter of a week or two, or if the weather became rainy. It could be several weeks more, sometimes even into the snow. We must remember this was before the time combines were in general use, and a decade before my brothers could afford them.

By the time I was 15 I was eager to prove my manhood by volunteering to have a team and a rack and be a regular member of the threshing crew. Looking back on it now I cannot understand why in the world I should be so eager. Both stocking and threshing in fall were some of the most grueling, backbreaking type of work to be found anywhere. Stocking was a matter of actually being out in the field and working 10 hours a day, usually during the hottest time of the year. It was a monotonous matter of endlessly bending over, picking up two sheaves at a time and setting them up, and more of the same, over and over and over. Generally, we were out in the field by 7 in the morning, worked till 12, walked back to the house for "dinner", and were back in the field by 1, worked another 5 hours until 6, then back home for supper.

Threshing was even harder. After getting up at 4:30 in the morning, there was the matter of feeding your team of horses, getting them harnessed, eating breakfast, hitching up your team to the "rack" (a wagon with a large rack to hold the sheaves) and being out there in the field with a pitchfork in hand along with the rest of them by 6:00 A.M. Instead of 10 hours as in stocking, the ante was upped to 12 hours out in the field - on through to 7 o'clock in the evening. Then on home, taking care of the horses, unharnessing, feeding, etc., until finally you had time to feed yourself and drag your tired carcass into bed. The wages for this during the '30's were somewhere around $3.00 to $3.50 a day and usually $2.00 a day for stocking.

To sustain the tremendous exertion required during the threshing season, we ate five big meals a day. Besides the breakfast, "dinner" and supper, the womenfolk brought a healthy lunch to the field at mid-morning and again at mid-afternoon, which consisted of sandwiches, coffee and cookies. Man, could we eat! You haven't seen real eating until you have witnessed a hungry threshing crew going at it. As cold as it got to be in Saskatchewan in the winter, usually during harvest time it was unbearably hot and the amount of food and liquid a man could consume between 6 A.M. and 7 P.M. was prodigious. Luckily during my first two years on the threshing crew, at ages of 15 and 16, the crops were light and the season relatively short.

So much for work and chores. During those years I developed ideas about what I wanted to become, what I wanted to do in life. Rather than something I felt I must resolve, they came on more as fantasies, something I dreamed of doing. At the age of 12 I was totally engrossed in baseball. I wanted to become a professional baseball player like Babe Ruth or Lou Gehrig. This lasted for about two years. Then I began reading western stories, such as Zane Grey and western pulp magazines, and my interest shifted to becoming a cowboy, then perhaps a rancher. I had been riding horses ever since we moved to the farm in 1926. By now I was an expert rider. I also became more interested in guns, both handguns and rifles. By the time I was 13 I began to practice in earnest with a .22 rifle we had. I began to dream of owning a large cattle ranch in Mexico some day, starting small and gradually building up the herd.

Somewhere between the baseball and cowboy obsessions, or shortly thereafter, my interest was sparked in becoming a policeman, or a lawman, or perhaps even a Canadian Mountie.

The romantics of western lore, ranching and cowboys fluctuated over the years, but off and on stayed with me for the rest of my life, and even now, more than 50 years later, I consider the Winning of The West as the finest and most productive period in the history of America.

After the summer and fall of 1932 were over, I had to make the decision again did I want to continue education? After considering the pros and cons, I reluctantly decided I would take another year of it. I was now 14 and in the eleventh grade. We did not have enough money in 1932 to send me to Rosthern for another year, which was what I would have preferred. So the only other alternative was to enroll in the Herschel High School, four miles from the farm.

This was fraught with a number of difficulties, the biggest one of which was getting back and forth. I had but few choices. I could either walk or ride some skinny nag when available. By this time we had an old army saddle to go with the nag. During the winter months (the biggest part of the school year) I rode horseback, which can be freezingly cold on bad days. My legs above the boots were often peeled from being exposed and frost bitten. During the spring and early summer days, I walked, because the horses were in use in the fields.

My eleventh grade year was not nearly as congenial as had been my tenth at Rosthern. At 14 I was still small, and some of the kids at Herschel thought I was lying to them when I said I was 14 and in the eleventh grade. There was still some hostility between the Mennonite kids and the predominantly English speaking, but it was not a big factor. Nevertheless, there was neither the congeniality nor the camaraderie among these students as there had been at Rosthern.

After completing the eleventh grade the next fall, 1933 was much of a repetition of the previous year, except there were a few improvements. Again, came fall, I debated whether I wanted to go back to school. I wasn't particularly enthusiastic, and my dad left it up to me as to whether I wanted to continue or drop out. Reluctantly I decided, what the hell, I might as well finish the twelfth grade. What else was there to do?

This last year at Herschel was better than the first. For one thing, I was now 15 and I had grown considerably, I even became interested in girls. Besides, I was now in the 12th grade, a senior, to be looked up to by the lower classes. My grades were good and I felt I was on top of my subjects.

Furthermore, in the Mennonite society, I was now old enough to go to parties, as they were called, along with my older sisters. Ever since the Mennonite colony around Herschel got started back in 1926, and soon after the Mennonite church was built in 1927, the social life among the Mennonites was a lively and on going enterprise. The young people were a "set" to themselves, and every Sunday afternoon they held "parties" at one house or another. These were good old fashioned parties, where they would play a number of games such as "Schluesselbund" and a number of other parlor games, of which singing and playing of musical instruments (the violin, the guitar, the balalaika) was a big part. There was no dancing, not so much that they were against it, but because few knew how to dance, it never having been the custom. Most of the young people were good singers, and at this German songs and conversation still predominated as a holdover from the Old Country. Some of the favorite songs I remember were such as "Schoen is die Jugend", "Ich hat' ein Kameraden", and others that stemmed from the lore of the Russian Mennonite colony. There was little drinking, although beer began to intrude later. If it was an afternoon party, "fesper" would be served in the middle of the afternoon. This consisted of coffee, sandwiches, cookies, cakes, pies and other goodies. By and large, good clean fun was had by all, and it was the prime arena for blossoming romances and future marriages. Sometimes the parties lasted well into the late of night. My sisters, Sarah and Katie, hosted many such parties at our house during the late 20's and early 30 s, as did, of course, many of the other participants.

Came the fall of 1934. I had completed my twelfth grade in June and had my 12th grade diploma. After again going through a strenuous fall of stocking, threshing and other accoutrements of harvesting, the question was. What should I do next? I was now 16, but too young to go to Normal School and become a teacher, the most obvious short cut to getting away from the farm and having a profession. You had to be at least 18 to enroll. Anyway, I was tired of studying and there was no urgent need to continue education, now or ever. I decided I would quit school, and stay home. I would do some siding and skating. I would do a lot of hunting.

It was at this time that I had become intensely interested in guns and in hunting. For the last eight years one of my closest friends had been a boy by the name of Peter Wiens. Although he was four years older than I, he was, it seemed, always at the same stage of development as I was, and about the same size. We wrote our eighth grade exams at Herschel in the same year of 1930 and had a lot of fun doing it. We played a lot of baseball together. And now we had an intense common interest in hunting, in guns, and reading Western stories by Zane Grey. In the winter of 1934-35 we went hunting together, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot. We shot rabbits, crows, ducks, geese, weasels, blackbirds, sparrows, pigeons, and prairie chickens. In fact, just about anything that flew, walked or crawled. We also did a lot of target practicing.

On my own, I also did a lot of trapping. On that mile long lake below the barn there were a number of muskrat colonies. In the summertime these muskrats had tunnels in the banks of the lake. When the lake froze over in the wintertime, they would build a number of muskrat houses on the surface of the ice. These were built out of the abundant seaweed that now became more prolific as the lake began to fill with mud and sediment. These brown houses would then have a number of interconnecting tunnels in and under the ice for the muskrats to reach the water and seaweed underneath.

Anyway, that same winter, besides a lot of shooting and hunting, I did a lot of trapping. I set traps in the muskrat houses. I trapped rabbits in their runs around our haystacks. I even caught a few weasels.

My biggest catch, however, was in the fall of 1934. While riding around on horseback about two miles south of the farm, I noticed some newly dug badger holes on some open prairie. I went back to get my traps. (In my assortment, I also had some large ones.) Within a matter of two days I caught my first badger, and a few days later my second, undoubtedly its mate.

There were two problems with this. For one thing, it was too early in the season for badger skins to have developed their full prime, and secondly. It was illegal to trap badgers at any time of the year. It so happened that when I was attempting to stow the second badger in a burlap bag and cart it off on horseback that my old black school buddy. Earl Lafayette, casually sauntered by on horseback to see what was going on. Anyway, I managed to cart both badgers back to the farm alive, housed them in an empty granary for several months of the winter, feeding them rabbits all the while. When I decided their fur was prime, I killed them and skinned them, stretching and nailing the skins down on a board to dry. After scouting for a buyer for some time I finally sold them for $5.00 apiece to a local grocery merchant, Bill Loewen, who had connections with a fur buying outfit out east somewhere.

My biggest rabbit hunting day was sometime in February of 1935. A Mennonite friend of ours, a Mr. Bernhard Berg, owned a farm about three of four miles east of us. In a modest valley there was a running stream that remained partially open all winter, and was a favorite rendezvous of the rabbit population. It so happened due to certain solar conditions that repeat themselves every 11 years or so, that this winter was an exceptionally prolific year for rabbits, such as I had never seen before or after. Anyway, that winter Berg's farm was swarming with rabbits. One fine day I arrived on the scene at the stream, and I could hardly believe my eyes. I had never seen so many rabbits all in one place in my life. I lay down behind an embankment and started firing with my trusty .22 single shot. Instead of the herd scattering immediately, they did not, but curiously seemed to be so confused as to come around and sniff their dead and dying members. Before I was through I had bagged some 20 rabbits.

I was on foot and obviously could not carry them back home. So I piled them in a neat pile and walked back to the farm. My dad and I then returned in a horse-drawn cutter, loaded up the rabbits and hung them up in our barn. I spent the next several days skinning them and stretching their hides on a frame. The going price for a rabbit skin that winter was a mere 10 cents a hide, but the rabbits did provide good provender for our numerous chickens.

Came the fall of 1935. The crops were a little better, but the prices for our produce were as bad as ever. I spent the fall again stocking and being a full-fledged member of the threshing crew. After laying off schooling for a year, I was still undecided as to what to do. However, I decided I had had enough of farming, hunting and trapping, and I had better get on with my education. I was seventeen. My dad concurred and felt he could subsidize me through one year of college. The tuition fee at that time was approximately $150.00 at the University of Saskatchewan and board and room cost around $18 to $20 a month. After a hard-earned harvest I boarded the train at Fiske on October 1, 1935, and was off to dabble in the halls of higher education at the University of Saskatchewan.

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Milestone Nine: On to Saskatoon and Higher Education

Another one of my Mennonite buddies that I had associated with for many years was a young fellow by the name of David Heinrichs. He was part of the Herman Lenzman family, who lived on a farm about three miles west of us. His widowed mother had married Mr. Lenzman several years ago. What with four of hers, three of his and two of theirs they now comprised of a mature family of nine children plus two parents. The Lenzmans and the Heinrichs too had come from Russia, but whereas we and most of the Mennonites around Herschel were General Conference Mennonites, the Lenzmans were Brethren Mennonites, a faint distinction of which the picayunish Mennonites made the most.

Like Peter Wiens, Dave was four years older than I, (it seems for some reason that most of the young people I associated with were a few years older than myself). He had been in the same time slot in his education as I was, having written his eighth grade exams at the Herschel High School at the same time as did Pete and I. However, unlike Pete, he went right on through high school, and then immediately on to the University of Saskatchewan to study agriculture. Since I had stayed home a year after high school, he was now, in 1935, academically a year ahead of me.

When I arrived in Saskatoon that first day of October, it was a fine bright Sunday afternoon. As I disembarked from the train at the CNR station that afternoon, and strolled down Second Avenue, the main drag of Saskatoon, I felt on top of the world. I was seventeen and felt like a new era was opening up for me. I especially remember the movie marquees (Saskatoon had three movie theaters at that time) and one featured Bing Crosby and Frances Farmer playing In "Rhythm on the Range". It introduced the still popular song "Don't Fence Me In".

The first place I headed for was the boarding house where Dave was staying, a square, red brick, two story building of ancient vintage, on Fifth Avenue, I believe. I had previously made arrangements with Dave that we would room together. Classes at the university had started a week earlier, and Dave was already well settled in. I was starting a week late, which, it seems somehow I managed to do just about every time in subsequent years. After making arrangements with the landlady, Dave and I went back to the station to pick up my small steamer trunk that was to remain my mainstay for many years, and contained all my worldly possessions.

Next morning. Monday, Dave went to his classes and I went to the University to look at the lay of the land. What did I want to study? I had no idea. Somebody steered me to Dean W.P. Thompson's office. I met the Dean, a tall, thin faced, square-jawed man of fifty who headed up the Department of Arts and Sciences. After a long, confused conversation to find out what it was I wanted to study, (I didn't know myself) I said that I could probably only afford this one year, and probably would go to normal school next year to become a teacher. The Dean suggested in that case it would perhaps be best if I took a general course and enrolled in the college in Arts and Science. There were, of course, a number of other colleges at the University - education, medicine, engineering, law, accounting, agriculture and more, the Dean pointed out. It was all news to me. I had thought University was University. I was learning fast. After this bit of briefing, we mutually decided Arts and Science was probably my best ticket, and decided on taking Chemistry, Physics, English, Ancient History and German. I figured that since I already knew German, the latter would be a snap.

After participating in a few football games (as a spectator) and some other indoctrination sessions, the serious work began, and the weather soon turned cold. Having come from off the farm as a green country yokel, it took me a while before I began to get the lay of the routine. In the first midterm exams between the start and Christmas I did not do well. By Christmas I was beginning to get the hang of the routine, but still had problems. I failed in Ancient History, and was having problems in Chemistry.

In Chemistry 2, which consisted of Qualitative and Quantitative Chemistry, we had at least six hours a week in the lab. We were given random samples of a certain substance in each experiment, then had to determine what elements were in it. That was the Qualitative part of it. In the Quantitative part, again we were given a substance, and we had to determine the exact percentage of a given element contained in the sample. For the first half of the year, it appears, I could not seem to get a grasp on the secret of the procedure. Suddenly I caught on and in the last semester I seemed to make 100% in just about every experiment.

In any event, I was not overly engrossed in my studies. I didn't even know what it was I was studying for. I was more interested in movies. I was trying to date girls. I went to the Mennonite church just about every Sunday, with Rev. J. J. Thiessen presiding and preaching.

Meanwhile, back at the boarding house we had an interesting but mixed family. This was 1935-36, in the depth of the depression. The owners of the boarding house were an elderly couple who were trying their best to eke out a meager living. They had two grown sons who were unemployed and seemed to prefer it that way. They had two teenage girls, one of which had a job, and the other attended school. Both of them worked to help fix meals and run the boarding house. There was a boarder by the name of Ray in his late 20's who worked as a mechanic in a garage. There was another fellow, dapper little chap that he was, whose name was Charlie. He worked for a printing company. He had a cute little girl friend (both were small) who would spend evenings with him into the wee hours of the night behind a locked door. They wanted to get married, but claimed they couldn't afford it. There was Queenie Chow, a very attractive young Chinese girl who also studied at the University. Then there was a good-looking young Norwegian fellow who was studying law, whose name I can't recall. What with Dave and myself that completed the "family" in the house. We were a mixed bunch, and congenial enough to make it interesting.

I began to date a few girls, but was not experienced enough to feel comfortable with them. I had no experience in dancing since this had not been part of the Mennonite ethic. However, I did go to a number of movies when I could afford it. They were about 25 cents for an evening viewing, less in the afternoon. The movies probably made the biggest impression on me, and I remember several of the better ones to this day. A few that stand out are "Mutiny on the Bounty" with Charles Laughton and Clark Gable; "The Informer" with Victor McLaglin; "Smiling Through" with Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer.

There were two more Mennonite buddies of mine from Herschel who were going to Normal School that year. Their names were George B. Wiens and Jakie Elias, and both had been a year behind me in high school, although both were two years older. Came time for the Easter vacation, they got the bright idea that we should have a real blast to celebrate the end of the term exams. So we all chipped in and got a gallon crock (the little brown jug kind like the hillbillies use) of wine and a sack of peanuts. Included in this group was Dave and myself, George and Jakie, and three college students by the name of Henry Rempel, Ernie Dyck and his brother, whose name escapes me. The latter three were six or seven years older than I. So there we were in the three bachelors' stuffy room (they did their own cooking and the smell went with it) the seven of us eating peanuts, drinking wine and singing bawdy songs. None of us had had too much experience in drinking. I had had a sip of wine or beer on rare occasions, but I had never been intoxicated before in my life. It did not take very long and all of us were not only intoxicated but roaring drunk and climbing walls. Jakie Elias was the first to go down. He threw up all over the floor. Wine and peanuts evidently didn't agree with him. Dave and I hung on to each other as we groggily staggered back to our boarding house about six blocks away. When I lay down in bed (still dressed) the room was spinning round and round. I was sick, sick, sick all of the next day and stayed in bed. Luckily it was the weekend. I asked myself this is fun?

In the last semester, it seems my studies all came together. I began to become intensely interested and involved in Ancient History and began to get a thorough grasp of the whole picture. I was doing excellent in Qualitative and Quantitative Chemistry, in fact making several 100's in the lab tests. I learned a lot about Goethe, Schiller, Lessing and other German authors I would never have known had I not taken German. In the final exams I passed all, making modest C's and B's.

When it was all over, what had I learned that was of real value? The answer, it seemed to me at the time, was not much. I came to the conclusion that Arts & Science was more or less a useless waste of time. I concluded the people who took it were neither fitted nor trained for any specific job, while at the same time, because they were "educated" they considered themselves too good to do manual labor. That's the way I saw it. I decided I would never pursue it any further.

There were a few other things that I learned at that time that appear more important now in retrospect than they did at the time. Whereas I was never too serious about church and my Mennonite religion, through the study of Ancient History, the study of the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Phoenicians, etc., there began to emerge in my mind a broad overall picture about religion per se. I came to the conclusion that the Mennonite religion, and in fact, Christianity, was not the only game in town. The fact that there had been hundreds, yes, thousands, of other religions that had come and gone would indicate that religion all religions were man-made concoctions, inventions, if you like, that had no base in reality any more than the idea of a Santa Claus. My views about heaven and hell, God and the Devil were never the same again. I had made a major discovery, but gave it little further thought at the time.

After writing and passing all exams I was back on the farm by early May, back to the same routine - ploughing, planting, hording cows, harvesting, stocking and threshing. Surely, I thought, there must be something better. There was one other conclusion I came to. I did not want to become a farmer. I was 18 now and my dad was nearing 60. He was wondering who would take over and carry on his farm. He wanted me to, but he knew I never would. He also wanted me to take catechism and be baptized in the Mennonite church. This, too, he knew would never come to pass. When I argued that the Mennonite religion was just another religion, no different from hundreds of others, he replied, that may be true, but if you throw your own religion overboard, you will do the same with any other church you may join. I said yes, maybe so - perhaps I won't join any church. I did not want to hurt his feelings by telling him the whole story.

We were still in the midst of the depression, and I still had to make up my mind as to where I fitted in. However, it seemed that I did not have too many options. I could either stay on the farm, or I could go to Normal School and become a teacher. I had no great desire to make teaching school my life's ambition, but as I said, my options were limited. One year of Normal School and I was qualified to teach. My dad agreed to fund me, although he made it clear it was the last go around. He wished that I would stay on the farm and take it over when he retired. My older two brothers already had farms of their own.

By the end of the summer I had made up my mind. I would go to the Normal School in Saskatoon and become a teacher. I was now 18, fully grown and more sophisticated about both education and city life. In fact, I looked forward with a great deal of anticipation for an interesting year of being back In Saskatoon.

The Normal School was located on Avenue A in the northern part of the city. I had already made contact with a Mrs. Trevillo who had a boarding house a few blocks south of the Saskatoon Normal School on Avenue A. I checked in at Mrs. Trevillo's and soon had a roommate as well. His name was Eric Neufeld, a Mennonite from Laird, Saskatchewan. He too, had attended the Rosthern G.E.A. when I was there in 1931-32 and we had quite a lot in common. Things started off very well. The session began on September 2.

The weather was pleasant far into the fall months. I had bought a tennis racket of my own for $1.50 and resumed the game of tennis with mucho gusto. The school had several courts. Towards the end of the season the school had a championship tennis tournament, one for the boys another for the girls. I entered the tournament and soon found myself in the finals. In fact, I had the championship as good as wrapped up, having my opponent, whose name was Cecil Johnson, down to match point. I only had one more point to make and the championship was mine. Then something happened. I began to play real carefully to make sure I won that last point. My overly cautious attitude lost the next point, lost the game and finally lost the match. I learned an important lesson, namely, in order to win you have to take chances. Instead of champ, I came in runner-up. So much for caution. Anyway, out of a school of 300, I felt that being runner-up wasn't too bad.

Normal School was much more fun than had been college the year before. For one thing, we were all in the same boat, had the same educational background more or less, were pretty much in the same age bracket (about 18-20) and were all aspiring to become teachers. And there were lots of girls, they outnumbered us two to one. Furthermore there was a lot of socializing and I was now more mature. In fact, my interest in girls had reached a high level.

There were six classrooms in the S.N.S. as we called it. They were designated from Room A to Room F. I was in Room C. One pleasant evening in September Room C organized a Wiener Roast to be held on the wooded banks of the Saskatchewan River. We had a big bonfire, plenty of wieners and buns, and also a load of marshmallows to roast. We sang songs, of which "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding" sticks in my mind. Among the girls in attendance was a pretty girl by the name of Victoria Neufeld (no relation to my room-mate) who was from Evesham, Saskatchewan. She had twinkly eyes, and that Dutch peaches and cream complexion. Although she was from Room "E" rather than Room "C" she had somehow come to the party. She, too, had a Mennonite background and we soon hit it off. I took her home, and we went steady for the rest of the year. She stayed at a school principal's house and exchanged baby-sitting for her board and room. All this was very convenient. Whenever the young principal and his wife were out for the evening, she would be "baby sitting" and invited me over to help. We soon had a flourishing romance going. She was, in fact, the first steady girl friend of serious nature that I had. We were both 18.

The school was continuously featuring events there were plays, musicals, dances, amateur contests, meetings, workshops, and athletic field days. One of the plays we put on before Christmas was the Sleep Walking Scene from Shakespeare's "Mac Beth", in which I played the doctor. As the actors were introduced each quoted a line from their part. I remember mine as I gazed into space I quietly breathed "Hark! She speaks!"

Now a few comments about the school's teaching staff. They were congenial but they were not the greatest. The Principal was a certain C. P. Seeley, M.A. He talked in a tone of voice that was reminiscent of Gen. Douglas MacArthur. But there the similarity ends. His outstanding characteristics were his huge ego and extreme pomposity. Of the total teaching staff of eleven, I liked our music teacher the best. Her name was Mrs. Helen D. Sherry, L.T.C.M. Although somewhat on the portly side, she looked and sang like a true Prima Donna in a fine opera. The rest of the staff seemed more like has-beens doing their job rather than the kind that inspired anyone to become a dedicated teacher, and reminded me of the old saying "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach. Those who can't teach, teach teachers."

All in all however, it was a great year. After nine months of social intermingling, practice teaching and much pontificating, we were finished. Those of us who graduated were now ready to go out and buck the real world. The first thing to do was to find a job, a school to teach in.

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Milestone Ten: Schoolteacher at Oskaloosa S.D. #3702

Having spent a happy year at the Saskatoon Normal School, the time had now come to go out into the huntings and find a school to teach. This was not easy, since it was now 1937 and the depression still lay heavy on the land. However, I had no problems in this respect, it seems, whereas many graduates did. I went to see the Reeve of our municipality, whose name was Earse Moore, a thoroughly British Englishman, who, although born in Canada, was still highly imbued with a staunch loyalty to Great Britain and allegiance to the king, God bless the little wimp. I was well known in the community in which the school was located and had the enviable reputation of being the brightest kid that ever attended Oskaloosa S.D. #3702, whether it was warranted or not. The male teacher that year happened to be leaving and there was an opening. Could I have the job er position?

The three members of the school board met to consider the proposition and came up positive. They were delighted to hire me if I would take the job at $50 a month. This would, of course, include doing the janitorial work sweeping the floor, firing up the pot-bellied furnace on cold winter mornings and other details. Also included with the package were free living quarters at a small teacherage that stood on the school grounds. It had two small rooms a bedroom, a living room that also doubled as a kitchen. It had, of course, no indoor plumbing, but then who did? To sweeten the pot I would even get a $5 a month raise the second year, provided I was still there.

Although $50 a month may seem like a pittance today, it was a fairly decent salary for a country teacher at that time. Economically, the situation for me was quite favorable. Having the little two-room teacherage to live in relieved me of paying any board. I did my own cooking, what there was of it, and groceries cost me next to nothing. I was only 2-1/2 miles from the family farm, and my mother was only too glad to supply me with all the milk, eggs, bread, cookies and other goodies that I could wish for. I soon sold my old bicycle with the wooden rims for $5.00 and bought a new one from Eaton's catalogue for $20.00 (Eaton's in Canada is, or was, similar to Sears).

The community and even the kids were friendly and receptive, and most of the families were eager to invite me over for dinner. I was, in a small way, a celebrity, a local success story, a local farm boy who has become educated above the crowd. Things began fairly well, although I had no desire to teach, to prepare classes and to mix in with the local gentry. There were still the Lafayettes with their large black brood half a mile down the road, and the bigger boys, Glenn, Homer, Earl and even Carl, had a habit of dropping by on their way from the fields and engaging in friendly chit-chat that would go on for hours. Furthermore, there were still four of the black brood that were now my pupils. However, whether I liked it or not, I was soon involved in teacher's conventions, social dances, and local affairs of every nature.

At that time I read Dale Carnegie's book "How to Win Friends and Influence People." I wanted to please everybody, have everyone like me and be Mr. Nice Guy, didn't I? I wasn't sure. I had an uneasy, ambivalent attitude toward the whole situation. I didn't like teaching, yet I wanted to do a good job. I wasn't particularly interested in the country yokels that made up the community. They were, by and large, dumb, uneducated, uncouth, crude and stubborn as mules, gossipy and highly opinionated. Yet, like a politician, they were my constituents and I had to socialize with them, intermingle with them and act like I was one of them.

So I read Dale Carnegie's book. It was about the worst thing I could have done. Like the Sermon on the Mount, it was loaded with suicidal, self-destructive advice. It said, in effect, of course you want everybody to like you, and in order to influence them, first of all, you must get them to like you. Flatter anybody and everybody you come in contact with, make them feel important, talk to them about those things that they (not you) want to talk about, and never mind what might be of interest to you. In other words - give, give, give, and like the Sermon on the Mount, love your enemies and sell all thou hast. It was, and is, lousy, stupid advice, and being young (I was 19) naive and inexperienced, I went along with it. I especially tried to translate it in terms of my attitude towards my pupils.

So I immersed myself with my "constituents", and initially everything went fine. Everybody (well practically, there were already some jealous troublemakers in the bushes) liked me. I played softball with the pupils. They crowded into my teacherage at noon, and I played the guitar and we sang songs. I accepted dinner invitations at every family home that invited me, even the Lafayettes who invited me more repeatedly than anybody. I went along with a small crowd of my age (some of which had been my former schoolmates at Oskaloosa) to the numerous country-dances.

It had only been six years since I had been a pupil at Oskaloosa myself, and the upper half of the pupils were junior classmates when I took my ninth grade in 1931. Some even reminded me of a hole in the window screen that was still there when I had volleyed a rock through the screen and windowpane in demonstrating the effectiveness of firepower by means of a sling. (The glass pane had been replaced, the screen had not.) Some of the girls in the upper grades were only a year or two younger than myself and began making eyes at me. We were all just one big happy family, were we not?

As can be predicted, I began having disciplinary problems. There were two nasty boys in the ninth grade (taking correspondence) who were especially bent on pranks and trouble making, and before the year was half over, discipline was a major problem throughout the school. I began to throw Dale Carnegie overboard and became tough. I used the strap on some of them. Before the year was over I had a major knock down and drag out fight with the two biggest boys. I expelled one of them. I was glad when the year was over. I hated teaching, and was at odds with the school kids and also with the surrounding community. It is a wonder I didn't quit or wasn't fired. But neither happened and I hung in there for another year.

It was the summer of 1938, an interesting and significant year for me. Surprisingly, of the $500 I had earned the previous year, I had saved better than half. Since we were required to take additional classes in education to nail down our teaching certificates, I decided to take a six-week summer course at the University of Saskatchewan. I chose Child Psychology, of all things, still figuring to unlock the secret of what made those little brats tick.

That summer was a pleasant and adventurous respite from the previous year of teaching I checked in at Mrs. Trevillo's boarding house again where I had been staying while going to Normal School more than a year previously. I was joined by my old buddies, Jakie Elias and George Wiens, who had been partners in crime when we had that inebriate blast after the Easter exams a little more than a year ago. Added to this congenial group at the boarding house were a few other fellow teachers who were also taking advanced courses. We did a lot of dating and much fun was had by all. It is one of the happier summers of my life.

I was 20. Up to that time my interest in politics had been practically nil. However, Adolf Hitler was beginning to make some rampant noises in Europe and I, along with the rest of the world, was beginning to take notice. In April of 1938 he had successfully brought about the Anschluss or annexation of Austria to Germany, to the overwhelming roar of approval of his fellow Germans on both sides of the border. Mussolini, too, was on the warpath and had not only invaded Ethiopia but was making some bombastic speeches in challenge to the democracies. At about this time I began reading Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in German. It had been in our house for years, but until now I had taken little interest in it.

The events in Europe and the reading of "Mein Kampf had a major influence on my total "Weltanschauung" and philosophical outlook on life as a whole. It did not come suddenly, but it grew as time went on, and in retrospect, although I had not the faintest idea of it then, it laid the groundwork for the philosophy of Creativity that was to evolve in my mind thirty years later.

But to get back to 1938. I resumed the second year of teaching with a grim resolution to finish the year and resume my studies in some other profession. I had never contemplated making teaching my life's work, but regarded it only as a practical stepping-stone to the next phase, whatever that might be. I considered two options, either I would go into law, or I would become an engineer, what kind I hadn't decided. To prepare me for the law, I began taking Latin by correspondence, since it would be a prerequisite.

The second school year was a strain. I withdrew from as many of the social activities as possible, and even decided to cancel putting on a Christmas Concert for the year, an activity that was a customary must, and I presume every teacher had put on since Oskaloosa SD #3702 was founded. That, too, did not set too well with the parents nor the community, but I didn't care anymore at that point. To hell with them. I became more and more interested in my future and that of Germany and Adolf Hitler. By the end of the school year I had made up my mind what I wanted to do. I wanted to live in a rejuvenated Germany, amongst creative and dynamic people of my own kind. I decided on engineering, and would study at the fabled and time-honored University of Heidelberg. I made preparations to make the big move.

By the summer of 1939 I had saved up about six or seven hundred dollars, a tidy sum for me in those days. I made application for my passport, visa, and other papers to move to Germany. I wrote to the German authorities about Heidelberg and other matters, and found that they welcomed people of German descent to return to the Fatherland. In fact, any money you brought in would be enhanced by special privileges, beyond the regular rate of exchange.

Everything seemed highly favorable and encouraging. There were several other Mennonites around Herschel that were thinking about moving to Germany, or had already done so. Among the latter was a noted Mennonite author by the name of Georg Toews and his family. Among the former was my brother-in-law. Peter Plett, who was married to my sister Sarah. The further conflict in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939 and the pending hostilities with Poland further heated up the political polarization between some of us Mennonites and some of the pro-British minded Canadians, especially those of the Canadian Legion, veterans of WW I.

Before my school year was over at the end of June, 1939, the British government, in a slick piece of incendiary propaganda, decided to use their king and queen as a political ploy and send them over on a tour across Canada to rouse the political and patriotic fervor of their Canadian "subjects", subjects of the British king, a situation the American people revolted against, fought against, and freed themselves from in 1776.

The Jewish propaganda machine was heating up war fever to a high pitch during that summer, not only in Canada, but throughout the world. On the other hand, although at a tremendous disadvantage, since the overwhelming mass of the world's propaganda machinery was in Jewish hands, Germany was doing what it could to stem the vicious barrage against it. We were getting second-hand German newspapers sent directly to us (with our consent) by some private sponsors in Germany to get their side of the story. "Their side" sounded pretty good to me and to a lot of other Mennonites around Herschel, and it was this information that alerted me to the Jewish menace and its worldwide tentacles of power. Although not all the Mennonites felt that way, most of them did, and there was a strong political polarization of emotion. Some of our former English-speaking friends were beginning to call us Nazis.

When King George V and Queen Elizabeth made their much-ballyhooed grand political tour across Canada at the end of May and beginning of June of 1939, the schools were still in session. Every school and school child was strongly urged to go see and meet the King and Queen at one of their designated stopping points. Our closest "stopping point" on their itinerary was Saskatoon, about 100 miles away. Despite all kinds of pressure to do so, I refused to go, nor would I make any arrangements to have our kids from the school sent to this political charade. In fact, for some time I had been telling Canadians that they owed Britain less than nothing, that Britain had been milking them for centuries. I further argued that we would be far better off to cut loose from Britain and join with our natural geographic entity, namely the United States of America. (I continued to take that position during the next six years of the war.) The Veteran's and other pressure groups arranged for transportation for the kids despite my opposition, and I couldn't care less. This, of course, did not endear me with the school board nor my former constituents, but since the school year was nearly at an end anyway, I didn't give a damn.

The school board sent me my notice as I expected, and that was the end of my teaching experience, and I was glad of it. I had no intention of teaching another year on any terms. I began selling my few personal possessions, my bike for $17, my guitar for $7. I had targeted the end of October as the date of departure. I began to tidy up my personal affairs and looked forward to Heidelberg, to engineering and a New Germany.

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Milestone Ten: Schoolteacher at Oskaloosa S.D. #3702

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Milestone Eleven: War Breaks Out: I Opt for Engineering

During the summer of 1939 the political situation in Europe began to heat up rapidly. After Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, the so-called "democracies" that were under the iron-fisted control of the Jewish power structure had evidently decided that Germany must be crushed, must be destroyed at all costs. I was not totally unaware that summer that war might ensue, but like everyone else, had no crystal ball to predict if it would come, and if so, when, or where, or how, or what its outcome might be. The National Socialist idea was rapidly spreading to other countries. Mussolini had led Italy out of the Communist mire even years before Hitler, and was solidly on the side of Germany. In Britain, Oswald Mosley was heading up the Black Shirts. In America such stalwart heroes as Charles Lindberg, Eddie Rickenbacker, and others were promoting the America First Party and trying to stave off any American involvement in a European war. Simultaneously, the Silver Shirts were active in both Canada and the United States. In Rumania, Ian Antonescu was heading up the powerful Iron Guard. Other countries such as France, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and even several of the South American countries had incipient counterparts that were sprouting up and growing. Who knows? Perhaps National Socialism could take over the world without ever going to war, as they had done inside Germany itself.

The Germans in Canada had for many years celebrated Deutscher Tag (German Day) as a way of expressing their roots and in appreciation of their German heritage. Some of the Mennonites had attended these for a number of years, but it was not until the summer of 1939 that I enthusiastically attended this celebration in Saskatoon. I remember it vividly, although I had already had a few beers. It was held in a large hall downtown, and there was a good-sized crowd. The Canadian authorities were standing by and "surveilling." They had forbidden the picture of Adolf Hitler to be displayed at the meeting, nor could his name even be mentioned. Nevertheless, I do remember that several fiery speeches were delivered, the red, white and black Swastika flags hung vertically in the background of the stage, and many sporadic Heil Hitler salutes were given repeatedly and enthusiastically. I thoroughly enjoyed the rousing get-together. It seemed to further polarize my dedication to sweep away the rotten old Jewish system and build a healthy New Order worldwide. Come what may, I wanted to be part of it.

I had already applied for a visa, a passport, and written to Nord Deutscher Lloyd for steamship passage, and was in the process of making all preparations for the big move. As August approached, I did the usual - stocking, running the binder, to earn a few extra bucks. One day, September 1, to be exact, as I came home at six o-clock after stocking in the field, my brother Korni broke the news to me that war had been declared and I would not likely be going to Germany.

So all my plans were shattered, or at least temporarily delayed. I had to revise my strategy. I could not now get to Germany even if I wanted to. What to do? Well, first I would wait to see the unfolding of events.

Events unfolded rapidly, as all the world now knows. After a few days England and France jumped into the fray and declared war on Germany under the specious pretext of "saving" Poland, for communism, evidently. A few days later, good old Canada, being the faithful patsy for England that she had always been, decided she must stand by the good old "motherland" and support England, although French Quebec and most of the other nationalities were against war. Even most of those of Anglo descent, especially the Irish, were probably against war, could they have voted on it. But of course, as always in a "democracy" the people never get to vote on the important, meaningful issues, only such trivialities as to which Jewish stooge should be put up front next. It would be laughable were it not so tragic to observe in retrospect as to how gingerly and surreptitiously the Canadian government slipped their people into a major worldwide conflict with tremendous ramifications that were irretrievable and irreversible. Parliament voted an "initial" sum, a paltry $100,000, to "support" Britain in her war against Germany. When we think of the billons and billons that Canada later spent directly on the war, and directly and indirectly subsidizing and supporting Britain before it was over, and the thousands killed in the war itself, this initial piddling sum to get itself sucked into the war seems like the ultimate exercise in hypocrisy and deceit.

Anyway, the war was now a reality and I had to change my plans. I decided I would study engineering here in Canada and then pursue either my studies or my career in engineering in Germany when the war was over. Again, I did not have a crystal ball with which to predict the coming events, but with the Blitzkrieg tactics demonstrated in Poland, perhaps it would be over in a year or two, and, I was confident, under the superior leadership of Adolf Hitler, this time Germany would be the victor. I would yet move to the Germany of my Ideals and help build the New Order. I decided that meanwhile I would enroll in the University of Saskatchewan and get started in my engineering career.

After a hard month of stocking and threshing and earning an extra hundred bucks, I was ready to leave. On September 24 my brother Henry drove me to the little CNR station of Fiske and I boarded the train for Saskatoon. I established board at the Henry Dyck family, who were also Mennonites. The landlord's brother, Ed, had been a schoolmate of mine at the Rosthern G.E.A. (he was then in the ninth grade) and another brother, Bill, now also studied engineering at the U. of S.

I enrolled in five subjects and entered into the studies with vigor and enthusiasm. I liked what I was studying and I wanted to make a good showing. Unlike the first year in Arts & Science four years earlier, I had no particular problem with my subjects.

To my surprise, I found there were three other Klassens, all Mennonites, no relation, in First Year Engineering. The first was a young man by the name of Harold Klassen, who was a fine fellow, but had no special merits to recommend him. The second was a young fellow by the name of Jake. He was a brilliant student, 18 years old, and he was keenly dedicated to his studies. Four years later he was to win the Governor General's Gold Medal, a most prestigious prize given to that one student in the whole University considered to have made the best grades over their total college enrollment at graduation.

The third member of the clan was a man of 29 by the name of Henry Klassen, whom I had also known at the Rosthern G.E.A. eight years earlier. He was not a great student, but he was a cultured man, handsome and quiet, seeking his niche in life and trying to make a living. He had a beautiful, well-trained baritone voice, and he would have loved to make professional singing his career, but the opportunities in that field eluded him. Anyway, we got together and after being at Dyck's a month, I decided I needed a change of venue. Henry and I agreed to room together and soon found a nice room with board at a family by the name of Bowers. They were a fine English couple who had the tragic misfortune of having to care for a ten-year-old idiot son.

Meanwhile, the war in Europe was spreading, and I watched its progress with interest and excitement. At this boardinghouse there also resided a young lawyer, a bachelor, by the name of Ted Nieman. We would usually listen to the evening news on the radio. Many is the time we were engrossed in lively and sometimes heated discussions of the historic events that were unfolding, such as the pursuit of the Graf Spec and its dramatic scuttling at the mouth of the River Platte off the coast of South America. (December 17,1939)

In the meantime, in extracurricular activities, I took up boxing at the Varsity gym, a course I pursued with enthusiasm for the next two years, and also a few classes in wrestling, which I did not pursue for very long. I also took swimming lessons at the Varsity pool and swam regularly each week. I did see a number of good movies, sometimes taking a girl friend along. However, my most ardent flame at that time was a vivacious Mennonite girl by the name of Lily Zacharias, from Fiske, of whom I had been seeing much for the last year while teaching school. For several reasons she came to Saskatoon every so often, and when she did we always had a most happy reunion.

It was at this time that I also embarked on a program of reading a series of major books. One of the books that I took out of the library and read in early October was Emil Ludwig's "Napoleon". His life and career made a big impression on me at that time, and I equated Hitler and Napoleon as two great and outstanding figures of history. I might say, in retrospect, that since then my esteem of Napoleon has decreased and that of Hitler has increased, and I presently regard Napoleon as a major catastrophe that happened to the White Race. Whereas he was undoubtedly a dynamic military genius of the first order and caused a major furor in world history, his twenty years of warfare and 40 battles served the White race badly. These wars killed off millions of Europe's finest manhood in their prime and thereby considerably lowered the quality of Europe's gene pool. The most tragic victim of this sorry massacre of White Men killing White Men was the French nation itself. This, after the massive bloodletting of the French Revolution, left France, who had been a first rate power for a thousand years, now and forever a second rate nation. For this we can impugn the Jews, who constituted the basic membership of the Jacobins, and were the prime organizers and instigators of the French Revolution. History will show that the Jacobins were the forerunners of Jewish communism, a force with which Hitler had to deal more than a century after Napoleon, and is still a Jewish cancer on the face of this planet.

Anyway, it was at this time, although I did not realize it, that I was beginning to become a philosopher and beginning to formulate a meaningful Weltanschauung. During this period I began to keep a bound blue-green notebook, in which from time to time I would write down random impressions of what was going on, and of what I was thinking. This I did for a period of two years, and fortunately, the book has survived unto this day. In the winter of 1940, when I was 22, I entered the following observations in my blue-green notebook.

Wednesday, March 6, 1940. In the fall of 1939 I read Napoleon, by Emil Ludwig, through which I developed an intense interest and admiration for the man. In his life story I found an expression of some of my own ideas and also gained a new outlook and Weltanschauung. I think to get the most out of life a person must work hard, fast and all the time. A timid, secluded life is worse than no life at all - "to have passed thru this world and not even have left a mark in it." Therefore, it is better to risk life to gain some valuable end than to carefully preserve it and gain nothing. This is shown by Hitler's personality and even more so by Mussolini. Doing work at the maximum rate of speed and when doing it applying all energy solely to it.

The secret of good thinking is concentrating completely on the problem at hand and forgetting about all others - shutting them out - they can by far best be solved by taking a definite other time to solve them by themselves. Doing a lot of thinking and planning at all times, including spare time, for after all, thinking costs nothing and hurts no one and is not unpleasant and yet it is the fundamental origin and cause of all success in work. In solving a problem and planning the "why and wherefore" are very important and must be understood. Details are very important and the success or failure of a large venture may rest on the success or failure of a small detail. A brilliant plan consists necessarily of a large number of carefully worked out details, and not a few "brilliant" ideas. Therefore, to execute a brilliant plan or program the work behind it will determine its success. Never let your mind go idle - have it going like an electric motor at full speed. In working out details, be vacillating, be grasping for a variety of ideas and pick out and select the ones most suitable. Try to think up all the possibilities in each case and just what you would do for each possibility so that when it does come you are ready for instant action. Always, when with people, act as if you were sure of yourself, even when you aren't. It is better to be sure of yourself and make a mistake than not to be sure of yourself and make a mistake. It is better to give a wrong answer than no answer at all due to being afraid of giving the wrong answer. Take chances and plan what action you could take in case your chance falls. (From Hitler.) Never let hardship or pain frighten you from an enterprise. They will do you good. If there is something I want to do and am afraid to do it, I must do it immediately. It is always wiser and easier to do it immediately than to put it off and wait in suspense. Have a strong will and determination and regard other people's wishes as obstacles of no value. Judge all things by their relative value and by no means over value public opinion and convention. They are hampering to action and success. However, listen to other people's ideas, for they are often material of which wise use can be made. Regard life not as a distant future but as a swiftly passing performance of today from which you are going to grasp your full measure. When speaking you must think intensely, make it lively, think quickly of the most suitable words to express your ideas. Speak as if you were deeply convinced that what you are saying is absolutely right and that you take it for granted that the person listening believes you. However, don't be fooled and reserve in your own judgment whether or not he believes you. Pronunciation is important. Get plenty of movement into your lips, speaking as clearly as possible, never too quietly or shyly and make the best possible use of your voice. In argument, bluff is valuable. Turn the debate onto grounds that your opponent knows little about and then talk as if you were an authority on it, even if you are not. It will make the opponent feel ill informed. If it is necessary to use force, decide quickly whether or not you are going to use it. If you do, use plenty of it to carry your objective through immediately. If you aren't, lead the contest away so that it seems it never came near a showdown. In most cases use force. Some of these ideas I got from Napoleon, some from Hitler, some from Mussolini and some I concluded myself.

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The next day I was involved in a minor incident that I evidently considered of some importance. I made the following entry.

Thursday, March 7, 1940. Today 3rd Year Engineers walked into the Drafting Lab, surrounded and overpowered me and tried to shave my mustache. They had a camera there to photograph the scene. I put up a hard fight - punching, kicking and cursing them. First year fellows quickly came up to see. I yelled at them (between curses) to sock these fellows. They (especially Smith) piled in and 3rd year guys got cold feet and gave up without having cut a hair. As soon as I was loose I slugged one guy. They then ambled off. My pants had been torn in the struggle. Dennis Herring and I went down to collect for damages. Half the engineering lab fellows (mostly First Years) followed. We walked into their lab and demanded repair of damage They (3rd years) quickly collected they'd pay the balance of the bill. They'd actually succeeded in cutting a 3rd year guy's mustache. We first years were sorry a free-for-all had not been pulled off.

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About the end of February, Mrs. Bowers, the landlady, told us all that they would have to close their boarding house, since they were unable to make ends meet. She would probably go to Vancouver, B.C., where she was offered a job. I felt very sorry for the Bowers. The most tragic burden in their family was the fact that they had to care for a ten-year-old son who was a complete moron. I do not remember too clearly anymore what Mr. and Mrs. Bowers looked like, but I will never forget that troubled, idiotic look on the face of this boy. This experience drove home to me the tragedy of having defective and/or deformed children, not only to the child itself, but what a burden and what misery they inadvertently heap on the rest of the family. It also raised the question in my mind - just what is the point of keeping such people alive?

Henry and I went looking for a new place to stay. I found a place with the Schmidt family, not too far away from the University. Henry did not find it suitable and we parted company. The Schmidts were a nice Dutch family, and had two beautiful blonde daughters, Alvina, 16, and Verna, 19. Of the two, Alvina was more brainy and Verna had the better figure and was better looking. Both had that peaches and cream complexion for which Dutch girls are noted. I stayed with the Schmidts after the end of the college term for several months. After a while Verna and I struck up quite a close relationship.

Came the end of April and the end of the term. I wrote my exams and since I had made a special effort to do well during the year I made all "A"'s in every subject. But for about a month before the end of the year another major concern had to be addressed, and that was the matter of getting some kind of a job during the summer to earn a few extra bucks.

Against the Evil Tide - 13

Milestone Twelve: Summer in Saskatoon and Second Year Engineering

By the end of April 1940, the war had been on for about eight months, but this reflected very little in the job market and the depression was still with us. For a month or two before the end of the term I began scouting for a job, any kind of a job. I made any number of applications. I contacted one of my professors for a job in electrical line work. I called the Saskatoon City power plant. I went to the newspaper (Saskatoon Star- Phoenix) to see if I could work on the printing presses. I called on the telephone company. I applied for a clerking job at the giant Hudson's Bay Co. I went to the CFQC (Saskatoon) radio broadcasting station, also CBK at Watrous, Saskatchewan. Finally, on my way down to Streb Electric, who seemed to offer me a good prospect, I stopped at Davies Electric, and the owner, Mr. Davies, offered me a job as an electrician's helper at 25 cents an hour, nine hours a day. I accepted and immediately was in business.

Now $2.25 for a nine-hour day may seem like peanuts by today's standards, but it was a living wage in those days and I had no complaints. My board and room at the Schmidt's was $20 or $25 per month, and this included a boxed lunch while working. I was holding my own, surviving, and even saving a few bucks.

The work at Davies Electric consisted mostly of house wiring, or electrical wiring in factories, re-wiring motors, and other general electrical wiring. One major job we worked at was the electrical wiring of a slaughterhouse on the west side of town that was being completely rebuilt within the ruins of a previous brick building. The new owner was a wealthy Hungarian Jew who had evidently fled Europe before the war started and absconded with all the loot he had.

Meanwhile, I was on the lockout for a better job and I soon landed one. On July 3 I started work with Saskatoon General Electric. This company, too, was in the electrical wiring business and had landed a major contract wiring a number of new hangars the Canadian Air Force was having built in the northern section of Saskatoon. The pay here was 40 cents an hour, an increase of 60% over what I had been getting at Davies Electric. This job lasted a month and a half.

I went back to Herschel August 19, and again stocked, ran the binder and worked on the threshing crew. Wages were now a little better - $3.50-$4.00 a day.

On Sunday, the 29th of September, I caught a ride with a farmer by the name of Ogle who was going into Saskatoon with his truck. I arrived back at the Schmidts at 11:30 A.M. and was back at the old boarding house. Next day I enrolled at the University again for my second year in Engineering, taking Physics 13, Geology 2, Thermodynamics II, Surveying, Applied Mechanics, Hydraulics. I also enlisted in the C.O.T.C. and was assigned to H Co., Second Platoon.

By the end of October, Abe Thiessen, a blonde fellow about my age who was taking first year Engineering, invited me to room with him at a boarding house owned by a certain Miss Adams. The rent was $20.00 a month, a little less than it had been at Schmidt's, but there was an added incentive. Miss Adams had a small "ballroom" where her sister, Mrs. Adams, gave dancing lessons. Actually, the ballroom was a former living room with a polished hardwood floor. Unfortunately, unlike Fred Astaire, I was not "born to dance", and I felt that some professional lessons was just what I needed to improve my terpsichorean deficiencies and improve my social graces. So I moved in, with Abe Thiessen as my roommate. Soon I was learning the difference between a foxtrot and a tango, a waltz and a polka. But lessons or no, a Fred Astaire I was not, and dancing never did become one of my more outstanding social graces. Too little too late.

The Adams ballroom had another major benefit. That Christmas I did not go back home, but instead I bought myself a set of boxing gloves which cost me $6.95. In this second year I continued taking boxing lessons at the "U" gym, and I was putting more punch into it. Besides myself, there were four other young fellows staying at the Adams' boarding house. There was Abe, already mentioned, Calvin Wight, a brainy engineering student, a handsome young fellow by the name of Morley, and there was a country yokel by the name of Mort whom we called Mortimer Snerd, after Charlie McCarthy's sidekick. We were all interested in dancing and also in boxing. The rest of the boys chipped in 50 cents each to help defray my costs of buying the gloves, and soon after Christmas we staged regular boxing bouts in Miss Adams' "ballroom", that is, when she wasn't using it for dancing lessons. Also staying at the boarding house was a young married man by the name of Gilbert, who was an expert boxer, in fact, a semi-pro. He would give us some valuable pointers from time to time, but was not a regular participant in our "bouts". He was just out of our class.

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On New Years Day, 1941, I made the following entry in my little blue-green book, an entry that reflected my philosophical outlook at that time, but not necessarily that of today.

Wednesday, January 1, 1941. Another year shot and a new one starting. Although I am young, I hate to feel that years are slipping by - have felt this for eight years. I feel confident that this new year of 1941 will see tremendous changes in the world's history and also in my own life. This year will see the end of the war with a German victory. It will also see me in another continent.

My impression of my boarding house. As a whole I am more satisfied than I contemplated. The board, as far as that goes, is average only, but the people are swell. My roommate Abe Thiessen and I get along fine. Although he hasn't the same intellectual outlook and ambitions as I have, we agree perfectly in religion and morals, that is in the complete lack of both. We are both fully convinced that religion is a farce, a man-made mode of worship for the benefit of honoring the man that set himself up as the object of worship. As far as morals are concerned, we both have a great contempt for convention and that reason should be the deciding factor of our actions - not obsolete outmoded convention. I do not think that I will ever change these basic ideas which I have had for two or three years but that I'll probably only modify them in later years. I believe that the world at large under the influence of totalitarianism will see drastic changes in conventions of the past few centuries, and that religion (Christianity) will be exposed as the spreading of a great idea by no doubt a great man but still a farce as far as the promised after-life is concerned.

What I learned about the exams - First of all, at least a month before the exam study like hell - it pays well - especially the last few days. Even if it becomes very monotonous, work hard. Never be too sure that certain parts of the course not stressed in class will not be on the exam. An example of this is the Math paper. Therefore, leave nothing out. Never be too confident of a subject and thereby neglect to study it. An example of this is Physics 13 in which I got a "C" instead of the "A" I would have gotten if I hadn't neglected studying it throughout the term. Never rest assured at the beginning of the paper that you have plenty of time to finish it and therefore need not hurry. Examples of this are the Thermo and Applied Mech papers. Speed for all you're worth and then spend all the rest of the available time reviewing and checking the paper - something that I was usually too lazy to do. Check and re-check - it's well worth the small amount of extra energy when compared to the time and effort spent throughout the year in preparation of the subject.

I have been at this boarding house two months and am glad that I have moved. In the first place Mrs. Adams is a swell old girl. Although her life and morals are far from a Sunday school example, she's fine to get along with and really a congenial soul. This just goes to bear out my idea that a person can be a fine character although they totally lack religion and morals. One important thing that I have gained at this place is the opportunity to learn dancing and I've made the most of it. In these two months I've learned the foxtrot, turns in the foxtrot, the flea-hop, the Schottische, slow waltzes with fast spins, the tango, the French minuet, the Blues, as well as the shag, and variations in foxtrot, such as in an "Old Dutch Garden". Because of all the practice and instruction available in the music room, before the year's over I'll be an accomplished ballroom dancer, comparatively speaking. Also, since I've bought boxing gloves I'm going to become good in the art of boxing by practicing with the boys in the music room and getting instruction from Gilbert, who is an expert.

I didn't go home for Christmas this year because looking back at last year's program in the diary I know damn well that I would have very little chance to enjoy my holidays. Since during the term I was too busy to go out very much I decided I'd make up for it during the holidays.

Somehow, I've lost my zest for studying. I don't feel that it's as important as I did when I came here. Maybe it's because I'm getting lazy or maybe it's because I feel I won't finish my Varsity here anyway and that a lot of the stuff I study here will be useless in Germany. Perhaps, too, if I read "Napoleon" or Hitler again I'd get more inspiration. I am now reading "Bismarck" by Emil Ludwig.

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During the year, as the war was becoming an ever increasingly ominous presence. It now became compulsory for all male students to attend Canadian Officers Training Corps (C.O.T.C.) Since my sympathies did not lie with the so-called Allied cause, I had little enthusiasm for these classes, and mostly found them to be a bore - a matter of taking orders from a bunch of tin-horn soldiers who didn't know one end of the gun from the other. I missed a number of classes and utilized whatever excuses I could trump up.

Towards the end of winter, our Varsity boxing group staged a boxing tournament in which we competed against some other "U", which one escapes me. It was an exhibition tournament. In which I represented our team in the welterweight class. As I remember, I boxed two bouts, the outcome of which I cannot recall, but evidently I did not get hurt, or I would have remembered.

My roommate, Abe Thiesen was a fine looking blonde Nordic type with a handsome smile and was quite a ladles man. During the year he was repeatedly fixing me up with dates. There were, however, two girls during my second year that have left a life-long impression with me, but Abe had nothing to do with my meeting either one of them. It so happened both girls' first names were Phyllis. The first one was Phyllis Erikson, a tall, blonde, statuesque girl of 16, who came to visit Gilbert's wife, and soon we were attracted to each other. She was a lovely girl, well built, long, flowing blonde hair and a beautiful face and figure. In fact she had excellent genes, and I would rate her a "ten". She soon became serious and wanted me to marry her. Abe, on the other hand, kept ribbing me that I was robbing the cradle, since she was only 16. However, she was, in fact, mature beyond her years, and would probably have made an excellent wife. Anyway, I was far from ready to tie the knot with anybody, and had a lot of plans to unravel first, and I told her so.

The second girl was a dark beauty by the name of Phyllis Bowie, who was also tall and well built, but very much of a contrast to Phyllis Erikson. I only met her towards the end of the year at a dance at a Technical School where she was studying to become a stenographer. In a way she was a strange girl with many unreal fantasies. She had great ambitions to become an actress on stage, and, in fact, she was not only a beauty, but a terrific actress. She would treat me to exhibitions of her thespian talents at the drop of a hat, and she was good. She performed in recitations, comic skits and other performances at church groups, at her school and in the living room. She also sang and played the piano beautifully, and some of my fondest memories of the times are when, after taking her home, she would play "The Blue Danube" or "Intermezzo" or other exhibition pieces on the piano.

But then there were times she would wander away from reality. When I first met her she told me she was several years younger than she actually was. (She was 20.) She also told me that she was the illegitimate daughter of a great stage actress by the name of Eva LeGallienne, whom she called "mummy" and who was now dead. She also liked to tell me what a brilliant mind she had, and that she made fantastic grades, that she passed the 12th grade at the age of 14. Actually, none of these fantasies were true, except that there was, in fact, a celebrated stage actress by the name of Eva LeGallienne, and she was still very much alive at that time, but had never heard of Phyllis. It took me till the end of the term to find out that there were some gross contradictions in her claims. When I confronted her with some realities, she broke down and confessed that these were creations of her over-active imagination, that she wanted to be somebody, and she had woven these fairy tales about her to construct a beautiful dream world. I was shocked, but she was so attractive, our relationship continued. In fact, intensified over he next year or two.

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Towards the end of the winter I made the following entry in my little blue-green book.

Sunday, March 16, 1941. The worst sin, I think, is to be poor.

Finished reading "Bismarck". Points to remember from him:

1. Kick like hell if you have a complaint coming and never let a wrong to you go by unanswered.

2. Psychological trickery devised by your own common sense.

3. Much narrating and talking.

4. "Unless your life you set at stake, your life you cannot hope to win."

5. Supreme courage. * * * * *

By the end of the second year in the spring of 1941, my interest in my studies was flagging. I finished the outdoor field survey work necessary to complete the requirements in that class. I wrote my other exams, passed all, but with only a little better than average marks.

There was one other obligation we had to fulfill to complete the year, and that was two weeks of military camp at Dundurn, Saskatchewan, as the finale to our C.O.T.C. training.

On May 3, after completing a set of four short exams, I locked up what belongings I had at the Adam's boarding house into my trunk, put on my army uniform and collected my gear. We gathered at a pre-selected spot at the "U" with our packs on our back. After standing in line for what seemed an endless period of time, we were finally marched to the CNR station to entrain. After we arrived at Dundurn we were again standing and waiting before the bungling officers could finally find the key to our hut. (The old army routine - "Hurry up and wait in line.")

Thus began my routine exposure to camp life in the Army. Everything was drab. The Dundurn landscape looked like a desert wasteland. The food was plain, the accommodations were crude, the routine was extremely boring.

By the end of the week, on Saturday, after drill till 12 noon I managed to get a 13-hour pass, to be back by 1:00 A.M. Sunday. I took a bus back to Saskatoon and by 7:15 I was back in the embrace of Phyllis. We sat by the bank of the Saskatchewan River and watched a full moon rise, then went to a dance at the Avenue Ballroom. By this time I had decided that in the interest of romance I would overstay my leave. After a beautiful evening of dancing, we had lunch at Campbell's Cafe, then back to the Bowie's home and the chesterfield. At the last minute I rushed back to the Adam's boarding house, changed back into my uniform and barely caught the 4:00 A.M. bus. There were a number of other fellow recruits In the bus that were already AWOL. Anyway, we got back at 5:30 A.M. and I crawled into my seedy bunk, only to be awakened by reveille at 0700 hours. No repercussions about the late return.

On May 13 we finally had an interesting day. I had been assigned to Platoon #7 and we were to participate in army games in the hills and sand dunes west of the camp. After much confused maneuvering and running around we were "charged" by army trucks who "overran" our positions, while we threw paper bags filled with sand (mock grenades) at them and snapped our empty rifles.

But two days later we were on the rifle range shooting with real live ammunition, and our skill as marksmen was tested. We had slow fire, rapid fire, pop and dodger, firing from both sitting positions and kneeling positions. Our ranges were 100, 300, and 500 yards. To my surprise, I did much better than expected and before the day was over I had racked up the highest score in the platoon. Evidently all that rabbit hunting with my good old .22 single shot back in 1934-35 had paid off.

That night the "army" had a major bash and banquet and I will never forget it. Loquacious speeches were made by the "generals", Scotch was served in paper cups and beer was generously dispensed by the pitcher. One of the generous dispensers of beer was a bunkmate of mine by the name of Kinsman, who normally slept in the upper bunk above me. As the banquet progressed, Kinsman proved to be one of his own best customers. Fortunately, I had enough sobriety left to take careful note of that fact and I took the necessary precautions to sleep in his upper bunk when I went to bed that night. When he finally crawled into my lower bunk sometime later, it was not too long before the expected happened, He puked all over the landscape, but fortunately, except for the smell, I was high and dry in the upper bunk.

On May 17, it was all over, and I returned to the Adams' house in Saskatoon to pick up my belongings. I said goodbye to Phyllis and headed back home to the farm. However, this summer I would not again engage in farm labor. In fact, farming, all farming, was behind me. Never again would I lift a sheaf to a stook, nor pitch a sheaf into the hopper of a threshing machine. I would instead, spend the summer as a hard-rock nickel miner, a piece of manual labor equally tough, if not more so.

Against the Evil Tide - 13

Milestone Twelve: Summer in Saskatoon and Second Year Engineering

Next Back Home

Against the Evil Tide - 14

Milestone Thirteen: Nickel Mining at Sudbury, Ontario

Next Back Home

A month or so before the end of the second year, Abe Thiessen told me that there was a strong demand for miners in the nickel and gold mines around Sudbury, Ontario. He had information that they paid fairly decent wages, something like $5 a day, and even as much as $10 a day if you managed to work in a bonus stope. This was 1941, and those kinds of wages sounded pretty attractive to me. At the beginning of April I wrote a letter to a few of the mining companies in the Sudbury area, and on April 18, I received a return letter from International Nickel Co. and another from Wright-Hargreaves Gold Mines. Both offered me jobs for the summer. I was delighted.

Sudbury, Ontario, is the largest mining complex in all of Canada, and is the mainstay of that mining giant, the International Nickel Co. The latter, at Sudbury, represents the largest nickel mining operation in the world. But there are also any number of other major mining companies spread throughout that vast area called the Canadian Shield, a huge geological formation of rock that covers an immense area wrapped around the Hudson Bay. Besides nickel, many other metals such as gold, silver, platinum and copper are also mined in this mineral-rich area. Accompanying these various mining operations are huge smelters and refineries spread over the landscape, with their tremendously tall smokestacks belching their toxic fumes into the surrounding atmosphere. As a result (this is more than 45 years ago) the landscape was barren, with hardly a tree or a blade of green grass to be found for miles around any of these smelter complexes. A typical smelter of such kind was Inco's Copper Cliff operation, located about five miles outside of Sudbury. Not only was the area treeless, but it was also as rocky as any moonscape, except here the boulders were larger.

As can be expected, Sudbury was a rough and ready city, with brawls, mayhem by knife or gun, or even murders a common occurrence. The Wild West towns of half a century earlier had nothing on Sudbury, Ontario. Add to this the hazards of working underground in the mines, and you come to the conclusion that It Is not the kind of quiet, peaceful city in which you would want to bring up your children. Any way you look at it, Sudbury is (or was, when I was there) a rough town complete with a number of breweries, all of which were doing a flourishing business.

The "good" wages had attracted several other college students. My buddy, Abe Thiessen, did not have to attend C.O.T.C. camp and had left for Sudbury two weeks earlier, along with another student by the name of Ernie Martin, and had reported back to me. Meanwhile, I got in touch with two other Martin brothers, Len, who was studying medicine and whom we called "Doc", and Ed, who was not a college student. Since Sudbury was about 1500 miles distant from where we were in Saskatchewan and since we were all broke, the three of us decided to get there by riding the rails, something I had never done before. Fortunately, Doc had had some experience in this time-honored profession and knew his way around.

After returning from C.O.T.C. camp I spent two or three days making the rounds with my family at Herschel. Then in the afternoon of Tuesday, May 20th, my brother Henry drove me to Rosetown where I boarded a bus at 9:30 that night for Swift Current. I was warmly dressed and had sewed a $20 bill into the lining of my jacket as a safety precaution in case I got rolled. When I got on the bus, I found my old buddy, Dave Heinrichs, who was my roommate back in 1935-36, already on the bus. He was now a full-fledged agronomist employed by the provincial government, and heading back to his home base.

We arrived in Swift Current at 12 midnight. Dave went to his quarters and I walked the streets for a while. Finally I turned into an empty church whose doors were unlocked. I laid a few hymnbooks on the floor for a pillow and went to sleep until morning.

At 2:00 P.M. I met with Doc and Ed Martin in front of Cooper's Store, our pre-arranged meeting place. An hour later the three of us were on a freight train, heading east.

We arrived at Moose Jaw at 8:00 P.M. and walked up town about a mile and a half to have supper at a cafe. When we got back our previous mode of transportation was just pulling out. But no matter. An hour later we caught another freight and found partial shelter in the nooks of an open timber car. We arrived at Brandon, Manitoba, by noon the next day. It was here that I almost lost my traveling companions. I had gone to a nearby store to buy some butter and milk. When I returned, the freight was just pulling out. I ran like hell and just barely caught the tall end of the caboose, with a friendly caboose tender waving encouragement.

We kept rolling on to Portage La Prairie, then into Winnipeg, Manitoba, by 7:00 P.M. that same day. We went to a cafe and had dinner, which, by the way cost only 20 cents. There Doc met an old friend of his and talked on into the night. By this time I was very tired and very sleepy, and we decided to stay overnight in Winnipeg. Ed and I went to some cheap hotel and I slept like a log. Doc stayed with the friend he had met, talking on until the cows came home.

Next morning after we had breakfast (porridge, milk, toast and coffee, all for 10 cents) I happened to run into an engineering classmate (from U. of S.) by the name of Ken Billingsley, who was heading for the same place as we were, so he joined our group.

The four of us boarded a train at noon and rolled on to the next divisional point, which was Kenora, Ontario. We were now sitting on top of the boxcars, since none were unlocked. One advantage was we could get a better view of the scenery we were passing through, which now was changing rapidly from the flat drab prairie plains to beautiful lake country of forests, rugged ridges of boulders and an 80 mile string of lakes.

Whereas the days were moderately warm, the nights were decidedly cold. I remember riding through the Lake of the Woods area just inside Ontario one night. We were riding on top of a boxcar. Whereas I had come prepared and was wearing warm clothing, poor Billingsley was not. As we lay on the top ridge of the rattling, swaying boxcar, I sheltered the poor fellow from the windward side with my body, clinging to him tightly, while he was shaking like a trip hammer, and both of us trying to conserve what warmth we could.

After various other stops at divisional points of Ingles, to Port Arthur and Fort Williams, (the latter two are now combined into one city called Thunder Bay) we then rolled on to Schreiber, White River, Chapleau and Cartier. Sometimes we would get into a divisional point at midnight. No matter. We would build a bonfire on the ground and sleep under the stars in the company of the rest of our less erudite fellow travelers. The way we looked you couldn't tell us from the rest of the bums.

Finally on the last lap, from Cartier to Sudbury, we found ourselves holed up in some nooks and crannies of an open timber car. It was drizzling and we were trying to get as much cover from the elements as we could. We got into Sudbury at 6:30 in the morning, wet, dirty, unshaven, and we were cold. Our clothing, hair and faces had collected a lot of soot in the last several days. We took a taxi to 198 Oak Street to call on Abe Thiessen and Ernie Martin, who had already established themselves two weeks earlier. As we knocked on the door of this boarding house in the early morning hours, a maid came to the door. As she looked through the glass panel at the black unshaven faces of four fierce looking desperadoes in their wet, bedraggled rags, she panicked. She kept the door locked and went back for help. Finally the landlady came and peered at us through the glass, but she would have none of us either. Finally, with our persistence, and by means of written messages that we displayed, we got the message across that we were friends and relatives of two of her star boarders. Abe and Ernie were in the middle of their sleep shift, but were alerted and soon identified us as friendlies and the door was unlocked.

After a short happy reunion, we sought out a hotel to shave, shower and get cleaned up. But, in our condition, this too, did not come easily, even in as rough a town as Sudbury. After being asked to leave in two successive dumps, the third finally referred us to the New Queen's Hotel, a fourth rate dump. Here we took a room and shaved, showered and cleaned up our sorry mess. We unpacked our bundles and got into clean clothes.

This was now Monday, May 26. We had been on the road and on the rods for the better part of six days. By 9:00 A.M. Abe and Ernie hurried over and showed us the way to the International Nickel Co.'s employment office, then went back to their boarding house to resume their interrupted sleep shift. (Everybody in Sudbury was on one of three shifts.)

At the employment office we found a large mob waiting and milling around. By virtue of our letters assuring us of jobs, Doc and I by-passed the mob and soon found ourselves at the company doctor's office getting our X-rays and medical examinations.

Doc and I then looked over the town for a place to stay. There were a number of boarding houses and the average going rate seemed to be about $8.50 a week, with three meals a day, one of which would be a boxed lunch. We didn't settle on any one location, and since I hadn't slept for three days by that time I was tired and sleepy, we went back to our sleazy hotel room. At 9:00 P.M. I hit the sack and slept like a log, only to be awakened at midnight by Abe and Ernie, who had just gotten off their swing shift and wanted to talk.

The next day we got a few things done. We (the four of us) selected a boarding house on Walnut Street with a family called Smythers, with Billingsley and myself in one room and Doc and Ed in the other. I was assigned a job at the Frood Mine and told to take a bus over to it. When I checked in I was given my employment tag (No. 8348), locker key, boots (they had special steel toe protectors), belt and a helmet.

Next day I reported to a Mr. Smith, who sent me to Stope 35.75 at the 3200-foot level. I made the following entry in my blue-green book: "Here I started my first day of mining, working in the "School Stope", with Jack Johnson as the stope boss. First impressions of mining - - changing pressure on ear drums while going down in cage - length of trekking along drifts mucking (shoveling ore) - safety rules - stope levels - hard work - boss' long talk with me on general items to kill time and let me take it easy." So ended my first day of mining.

I found out a lot about the mining industry that summer, an industry that is an underground world unto itself. My job was that of the lowliest laborer shoveling the fragmented nickel ore down the hole of the stope (called a chute) to where it would feed into ore cars on one or more levels lower down. The cars would then take the ore to a vertical shaft where it would be dumped into a large cage or elevator which in turn would hoist it to the surface.

Shoveling ore for seven hours a day (an eight hour shift, one hour off for lunch) was hard physical labor, about as tough as threshing. Not only was it hard, but the atmosphere in which we worked was grueling. We would work on levels that were anywhere from 2000, 3000 or more feet underground. During the four months I worked underground, I worked in at least half a dozen different levels and under as many different stope bosses. The lowest level I was in was a full 5000 feet underground. That's almost a mile! The temperature gets about one degree hotter for every 100 feet down and at 5000 feet it is almost unbearably hot. Not only is the heat oppressive but the air is extremely humid and oppressive. Hot water is leaking out all over the place and has to be pumped to the surface continuously. The only way that such areas can be made tolerable at all is to have large quantities of air blown down through the shafts and the levels to the individual stopes, but even this does the job only partially. At the lower levels, everything is hot the walls are hot, the ore is hot, the leaking water is hot. Add to this the increased atmospheric pressure and the inky darkness to which a workingman is confined, and you have a less than pleasant environment in which to work. The only light you have is the electric light fastened to your helmet. When it is turned off, the blackness is total. In order to power these lights, it was necessary to wear a heavy rechargeable battery on your belt. This battery was recharged every day after you divested yourself of it at the end of the shift.

There were three eight-hour shifts. There was the night shift, which lasted from 12 midnight till 8:00 A.M., the day shift, from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., and the swing shift, from 4:00 P.M. to midnight.

The routine mining operation was carried out around the clock, 24 hours a day. The whole mining network consisted basically of a series of shafts (vertical), levels and drifts, (horizontal), and stopes. The latter were about the size of a room and it is here that the broken ore lay to be shoveled down into a grate (a hole about three feet square; with two iron bars or rails across to help keep a man from dropping down this same hole. The spacing between these rails was approximately a foot, large enough for a man to drop through if he were careless, and every now and then they did, usually to their death.) The ore then fell down a shaft, called a chute, to a waiting ore car below.

There were several sets of specialized crews working in the operation, besides us muckers who shoveled the ore. One of the other crews of vital importance were the drillers and the dynamiters. This crew would drill holes about 1-3/4" in diameter and about six feet deep into new ore on the face of a stope that had been emptied of ore by the previous shift of muckers. They would then push sticks of dynamite into these holes with wooden pokers. They would then insert the fuses into the holes and at the end of their shift when everything was set, light all the fuses as quickly as possible and run for cover. The next shift would then come in and remove the blasted ore by shoveling it down the stope shute, as I mentioned earlier. This was called mucking, and that is what my job was that summer. After the stope had been cleared, the timber men would come in and frame it up with heavy timbers the size of railroad ties. After that the drillers and dynamiters would come in and drill and blast again and so on, around the clock. Another crew would come in and fill the emptied stopes with crushed rock so as to keep the whole network from caving in and collapsing.

As can be expected, what with handling dynamite, heavy chunks of ore that might dislodge from the ceiling and drop on a worker, what with heavy timbers to install, ore cars and heavy machinery to manipulate, deep chutes to fall into, the work was rugged and it was dangerous. Despite all the myriad of safety regulations that were strictly enforced, there was a considerable number of workers that were hurt and that were killed each year. Among the most vulnerable, of course, were the greenhorns, many of whom were the temporary summer student workers, to whom all this was a one-time operation. In fact, I had a few close shaves myself. One time a large piece of ore dislodged from the ceiling above me and just barely grazed my forehead. Another time, when I was alone in the stope shoveling away at a large pile of broken ore (muck) that reached to the ceiling, a heavy piece rolled down the slope at me. In my effort to back away from the oncoming mass, I stepped into the chute, and one leg went down into it while the other lay astride the protecting rails. The oncoming piece, which weighed a couple of hundred pounds, kept on coming and pinned down my ankle. Outside of a minor sprain, I was unhurt.

After I got settled in I found that there were quite a number of "U" students from all over the country, and even quite a few that I had known back in Saskatchewan. So there was ample intelligent company, besides the group of six I have already mentioned. There was also abundant opportunity for recreation. I had my tennis racket shipped out to me (along with other articles) after I arrived, and it was one of my favorite sports during this summer. We also did a considerable amount of bowling at the alleys, and now and then went swimming at nearby Lake Ramsey. It was an interesting side observation that when at the latter, to see so many white, untanned bodies and faces at a swimming beach. Whereas almost anywhere else you would expect browned and tanned bodies and faces at a beach, these underground miners not only got very little sun during their workday, but the humidity and sweat of their working conditions seemed to further bleach and whiten their skin tone.

All the while, I was avidly following the events of the war in Europe. I remember vividly that on June 22, 1941, I was just coming off of my night shift (8 A.M.) and getting out of my dirty working clothes in the men's locker when I heard much excited talk about another historic event - Germany had declared war and crossed the borders into Russia! I was exhilarated! At last! I had always known that it would happen! Hitler would march into the very lair of the communist beast itself and crush it once and for all! It would be just vengeance and retribution for all the destruction and agonies the communist criminals had caused my family and my people! In the following days and weeks I watched with pride and excitement as the German armies marched eastward with amazing rapidity and scored one victory after another.

Although bars were numerous and the liquor flowed freely in Sudbury, fortunately, our group indulged very little, as did most of the other college students, with some exceptions. However, the same cannot be said about the permanent hard core of professional miners. They were a rough and rowdy bunch. Payday was twice a month, the first and the fifteenth. On such days, much of the population degenerated into a drunken brawl, and sometimes it seemed it wasn't safe to cross the street on such days. Ethnically, besides the Anglo-Saxon population, there was a large concentration of Finns, and also of Ukrainians. The latter remind me of a memorable incident.

One Sunday in the middle of July, Bill Williams, one of the boarders at the house where Abe and I were staying, came back from a Ukrainian wedding with enthusiastic reports about what a good time was being had by all, what with good food and plenty of drinks being served. The day was hot and Abe and I had just been ready to go for a swim in Lake Ramsey, which we did. There we ran into two of the Martin brothers, Doc and Ernie. After a cool swim, we got to talking about this Ukrainian wedding that would still be going on far into the night. Suddenly all four of us decided we would go to the party and find out for ourselves the joys of a Ukrainian wedding. We found that everything was just as Bill Williams had described, even better. They welcomed us (and anybody else) with open arms. There was much dancing, good Ukrainian music, good food. They were also serving some excellent 50-60 punch, and also plenty of hard stuff. It was the kind of proposition we could not refuse. After a while we were feeling very good, and twirling the Ukrainian girls around in their native dances. As the night wore on we were feeling better and better and by 2:00 A.M. when we left, we were feeling damn good. As we walked home we were singing college songs so loudly they could be heard a block away. Soon some cops drove up and shouted from the patrol car for us to pipe down. I shouted back happily "OK Doctor", a phrase we commonly used, since we had Doc in our company. The cops misunderstood me and thought I had called them suckers. Instantly, they picked me up and hauled me off to the police station, where they quickly emptied my pockets and were ready to book me. Once there, I quickly sobered up like the gentleman I always was and politely explained the "doctor" phrase, and that of course, I had nothing but the highest respect for the police department. By this time the other boys arrived at the police headquarters to see what was happening. The chief believed my story (which was true), restored my valuables and let us go with the admonition - next time, boys, keep it down!

On Sunday, September 21, the mining episode in Sudbury was all over and I emerged after a little less than four months with no broken bones and considerably richer in the pocket. I was happily heading back to Saskatoon to embark on my third year of Engineering. This time I was not going to ride the rails like a bum, but was dressed up in suit and tie, and bought a first class ticket at the CNR station. I changed trains at Sudbury junction and got into a sleeper, instead of a day coach. This time I was going back in style.

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Against the Evil Tide - 15

Milestone Fourteen: Final Year of Engineering in Saskatoon

Next Back Home

This time I did not check in back at the farm at Herschel, but took the train from Sudbury directly to Saskatoon. The first thing I did was check in at the Senator Hotel and make a date with Phyllis Bowie that night. It was wonderful to see this beautiful, lovely, loving girl again after four months in Sudbury.

The next day I checked in with Calvin Wight, who had found a place at 1008 - 11th Street with a landlady by the name of Mrs. MacDonald, another poor widow trying to make a living. Calvin was taking the same courses in Mechanical Engineering as I was, and we decided to room together. That same day (September 24) I registered with the University and paid an $80 tuition fee.

* * * * *

As usual, at the beginning of a college year, my resolve and ambitions were always at their highest, and I recorded my resolutions at that time in my little blue-green book.

Saturday, September 27, 1941. This is the beginning of my Third Engineering Year at the University, therefore I am going to state my objectives and resolutions of what I wish to accomplish for the year.

1. Make the fullest use of my time.
(a) Work like hell when I work and concentrate in the same fashion.
(b) Take enough time out for enjoyments and make them plenty worthwhile.
(c) Organize and schedule my time.

2. Win a scholarship in Third Year Engineering. I MUST DO THIS to justify my confidence in myself.

* * * * *

I had been bored and disgusted with last year's C.O.T.C. classes, and they were still as compulsory this year as last. I had dragged my feet about signing up for C.O.T.C. as the term commenced, and as October ended, I had not gone to a single parade or lecture. I decided, to hell with them, I would join the Air Force. Fortunately, the University was offering an Air Crew Training course that was an alternative to C.O.T.C. On October 31 I signed up and promptly had my R.C.A.F. medical exam. Five of us from the U. went down to the medical center for the R.C.A.F. (not at the U.) at 7:30 in the morning and were thoroughly examined until II A.M. Evidently, I passed with flying colors, according to the R.C.A.F. officer's general remarks. His report read: "This chap was found to be calm and cooperative, keen and alert. He was polite and mannerly for a University student. Good neuromuscular, cardiovascular. Rapid reaction time. Very desirable material. Fit for full flying duties."

So I was through with the boring, time-consuming lectures and parades demanded by the C.O.T.C. I was now getting instructions in flying, in navigation, in radio, in identification of enemy aircraft, and much more. Even before this, my interest in flying and aircraft had been keenly aroused. I was interested in what I was now studying and glad to have rid of the C.O.T.C. Also, a vague plan began to form in my mind. Should the war last longer than expected, I might join the air force after graduation and somehow drop in on German soil to help strike a blow for the cause. Maybe. A possibility.

After three weeks with Calvin and Mrs. MacDonald I was fed up with the place. Jim Dodd, a big young Irishman from Agassiz, B.C., with whom I had been collaborating in my studies during the latter part of last year, and even more so this year, seemed like a more compatible roommate, and we were more or less on the same ideological wavelength. Besides, there were three old fuddy-duddies in the same boarding house where I was, and they were getting on my nerves. So on October 27 I moved in with Jim and into the Johnson's boarding house at 714 University Drive. Some added advantages were that it was closer to the "U", and had a number of rambunctious college students that were more in my peer group.

At the end of the first semester my grades were fairly high: Applied Mechanics, "A"; Hydraulics, "A"; Machine Design, "A"; Electrical Engineering "B"; Economics 5, "C"; Air Navigation, "C"; Mechanical Engineering, "D". So I had three "A"s, not bad. The only other fellow in third year Engineering that had four "A"s was Jake Klassen, that brilliant student I mentioned earlier and who was to be awarded the Gov.-General's gold Medal at the end of his fourth year. I guess I had made a point, that I could make good grades if I wanted to. But my heart wasn't in it, because for the rest of the year my interest in my studies waned, and my grades at the end of the year, although I passed all, reflected it.

* * * * *

I went home to Heschel that Christmas and made the rounds with my family. There were, besides my aging parents, three other families to make the rounds to, namely, those of Henry and Annie, Sarah and Peter (Plett), and Korni and Martha. Since the latter three families all had kids, this included a lot of nieces and nephews as well.

* * * * *

After the beginning of the year I made another notation in my little blue-green book, and from the vantage point of 46 years later when I have a lot less time left than I had then, I am somewhat amused by my ongoing obsession with TIME during that period. Here is what I wrote:

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 1942.
TIME

I am determined- To utilize my time to the utmost possible extent in both work and pleasure. In work conserve time by working at a speed typical of winning a speed contest or the rate and effort I use in writing an exam. Only by racing for time can CONCENTRATION on a subject be maintained. Budget your time as if every minute lost would cost a dollar. Plan your leisure recreational time generously, then splurge into it relaxed and wholeheartedly. Plunge into pleasure as when diving into an ocean of water. Time profitably spent and utilized to a maximum makes for a full and interesting life. Time is the key to success. Do today what you can do tomorrow.

* * * * *

My love affair with Phyllis Bowie continued throughout the year. Although she was unpredictable and sometimes erratic (aren't we all?) and although we sometimes had our problems, by and large, it was a beautiful experience filled with mucho nostalgia. We saw each other as much as three or four times a week. Besides a number of movies, skating and other minor events, I took her to several major events such as "The Engineer's Theatre Party and Dance (Oct. 10); Arts Summer Waltz Nite (Oct. 24); "Informal Dance", at the Cavern (Nov. 28); New Year's Eve celebration at a theater (Dec. 31); The first University Informal Dance of 1942 (Jan. 9); Engineer's Theatre Party and Dance (Jan. 30); she took me to "The Ladies Formal Dance" at the Bessborough Hotel (S'toon's finest! Feb. 6); celebrating my birthday I took her to "The Engineer's Formal Dance" at the Bessborough (Feb. 20). We celebrated our "First Anniversary" by having dinner at her home then went back to the "Success Business School" where we had first met exactly a year earlier. (Mar. 8).

Towards the end of the last term, I had to make a decision as to what kind of engineering I wanted to pursue, since in the fourth and last year, the classes become more specialized towards that end. Both Jim and I had decided we would pursue Electrical Engineering. Since the U. of S. didn't offer that course in the last year, we had to think of another college that did. There were, of course, several, but the University of Manitoba at Winnipeg seemed like the best choice. The first three years of its Electrical Engineering Course dovetailed with that of the U. of S. Mechanical Engineering course, and the credits were interchangeable both ways, our mechanical students could finish in electrical, and similarly, their electrical students could finish the fourth year here in mechanical, without losing any credits or having to take any extra classes.

Before I left Sudbury in the summer of 1941, I had checked into the electrical department of International Nickel as to job availability in that division for the next summer. I did not want to spend another summer underground shoveling (mucking) heavy nickel ore. The possibilities seemed favorable and I followed this up during the year with further correspondence which assured me of a job in the electrical department for the summer of '42.

Finally, on Friday, April 17, I finished my last exam at 5:00 P.M. I took the streetcar back to the boarding house, packed my things and whipped over to the bus station at 6:00 P.M. to board a bus for Rosetown. When I got there at 9:00 P.M., by prearrangement, my brother Henry was there to pick me up and take me home. But first we thought it appropriate to celebrate the occasion. We went over to the Rosetown Hotel and had three beers each, before making the 20-mile drive back to his place. It had been a busy day.

Again, I made the family rounds, went to the Mennonite church the following Sunday, and shook hands with a lot of old friends and renewed a number of acquaintances.

Then Monday, only three days after I had arrived, I was back on the bus headed for Saskatoon. I checked In with Jim Dodd, who was still at the boarding house, and also checked in at the "U", where I had to finish and clean up a few workshop exercises in blacksmithing and also machine shop. This I did In a matter of two days.

Jim had decided not only to take electrical engineering at the U. of Manitoba with me next year, but that since I had already arranged a job for myself in the electrical department of Inco., that he would go along with me to Sudbury and try his luck in getting a similar job.

Against the Evil Tide - 16

Milestone Fifteen: The Summer of '42 in Sudbury

Next Back Home

The evening before I had spent saying goodbye to Phyllis, and getting back to the boarding house at 12:30 A.M. was later than I had planned. I still had my packing to do and a few errands to run before catching the bus at 11 In the morning of Thursday, April the 23rd. However, with Jim's coordination and cooperation, we were both on that 11 A.M. bus, off and running, headed for Sudbury.

We stopped at Regina to have a bite to eat. While passing through we happened to see two of our fellow classmates, namely Loucks and Busby, who were just coming off their jobs in Regina. Back on the bus, we arrived at Brandon, Manitoba, at 3 A.M., where we had another quick lunch of a hot dog and a vico. It rained all through the night, and finally at 7:30 in the morning we arrived in Winnipeg.

There were two matters we intended to take care of in Winnipeg. First, we wanted to look over the University and find out more details about the engineering college. On going over there we first met with the president of the University, the renowned Dr. Sidney S. Smith, a congenial and giggly fellow in his early fifties. Then we met with the head honcho of the Engineering department. Dean E. P. Fetherstonhaugh, a lean, tall, dignified old Scottish gentleman who headed the Electrical Dept.

The other matter was getting together with a man by the name of Gladman, who was the Winnipeg International Nickel representative. In their letter Inco had promised to pay my fare if I came to work for them. After much scurrying around we finally caught up with Gladman, but he claimed he knew nothing about paying for our fare. By this time it was late in the afternoon and we were too tired to get on the bus again.

We took a room at the Brunswick Hotel and had dinner. Then we went to the Times Theatre and saw a double feature. Jim slept through the whole performance. (We hadn't had much sleep on the bus the night before.) Next day at 11 A.M. we went to see Gladman again. He informed us that the word from H.Q. was we would have to pay for our own fare.

On the way over, Jim and I saw some typewriters at Crawford Salvage, a second hand store. We thought every student should have a typewriter, so we each bought one. I bought a Remington Rand Portable "Cadet" for $32.50 and Jim bought a Baby Hermes for $21.00. Deciding to make the rest of the Journey by train rather than bus, we went down to the CNR station and at 6:30 P.M. we boarded the train for Sudbury.

We arrived at Sudbury the next day, on Sunday, 10:15 P.M., April the 26th. We immediately tried to make contact with my old buddy Abe Thiessen, who had not gone back to college, but had stayed on with his old job. However, we were unable to reach him, and being tired and hungry, somewhere around midnight we had something to eat and then took a room at the same place, the Rex Cafe.

At 9 A.M. sharp the next morning, April 27, we were down at the Inco Employment office to sign in and take our physicals. It was a bad day. A carload of men had just arrived from Winnipeg, to also be processed. There was much milling around and we were treated like a consummate herd of cattle. After passing the inspection, we were sent to Copper Cliff, about five miles out of Sudbury, where Inco's big smelters are located. Here we met two senior Inco officials, J. S. Gordon, and the head of the electrical dept., and a Mr. Gillespie. The latter interviewed us (Jim, myself and two other "U" students), fixed our wages and assigned us to our respective jobs.

I was first assigned to the Coal dept. This section served the function of blowing huge quantities of powdered coal dust to fuel the furnaces of the various smelters that were scattered over the immense complex. Conveying the powdered coal to its various destinations was a complex of huge pipelines, some as much as six feet in diameter. Supplying the power to move all this fuel at a rapid clip were giant blowers powered by electric motors. It was a dirty, dusty set-up, and after two weeks I asked for a transfer. It was extremely fortunate that I did so, for it was only about three days later that a powerful explosion ripped the coal plant and several men were killed.

My transfer was to the Meter Dept. with a man by the name of Clayton Robertson (Robbie) as my foreman. However, a congenial fellow by the name of Bert (Tiny) Thompson was my working partner and my surrogate boss for the rest of the summer. He was quite a character. He was six foot five and weighed in at 300 pounds. He was highly intelligent, well educated, and well versed in the arts and in philosophy, literature, and basically a cultured man. Yet here he was working in a roughneck environment, frequented the roadhouses with an uncouth gang of men, and in a trade rather than a profession for which he was educated and should have pursued. He had one major weakness. He drank like a fish, and as a result, he would not drive a car and did not own one. He was a jovial fellow, interesting to converse with, and we became good friends.

The major part of my summer was spent in restructuring the meter and control panels in a large building called Sub Station No. 1 (Electrical). In it were located a number of huge motors that drove a series of large compressors or blowers, which supplied forced air to the smelters and also to the coal department. It was a terribly noisy place and the high whine of the blowers was ear shattering. We worked a lot of overtime and often in 12-hour shifts, sometimes even as much as 15 or 16 hours a day. I had no complaints, since the pay was good (67 cents an hour) and I was paid time and a half for overtime.

Jim and I stayed at a rooming place at 178 Pine Street but made arrangements to eat at the Kuluttajat Restaurant - a Finnish establishment. We bought weekly tickets and could eat as much as we wanted to, three meals a day, when we wanted to. They also fixed our box lunches to take to work. It was a convenient arrangement, except the company we ate with was rather lowbrow. But then, of course, this was Sudbury.

Despite much overtime, I still seemed to have plenty of time for tennis, swimming, bowling, snooker and movies. Nor was there any lack of peer company. Besides Jim Dodd, most of the old gang was either still there or had returned. Abe Thiessen was still with us and all three of the Martins fellows were back. Also, there that summer from the U. of S. were some engineering buddies by the name of Dan Stann, Ted Smith, Ed Gawley and a few others. We were a congenial gang and we made the most of an excursion we would not necessarily want to make permanent.

On May 11, through the published resume in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix (it published everyone's grades wholesale in one issue) I found out what my grades were for the previous third year Engineering. I managed to get two "A"'s, three "B"'s, two "C"'s, and one "D". I was happy with that. It was better than I had expected, especially since I had put more emphasis on "pleasure" in the last half of the year than "work". Phyllis accounted for much of the former, but it was worth it.

Jim Dodd was assigned to a foreman by the name of Sharkey, whose gang worked on outside line and buss work. After being Into his Job for a month, poor Jim met up with a most terrible accident. They were working on a distribution platform about 15 feet above ground installing copper buss bars. One day, on June 27, to be exact, Jim had been told to pick up some supplies from the Parts Dept. to bring to the job. When he got back there was no one on the platform, but the power had been turned on, a vital fact of which Jim had not been informed. As he climbed back up the platform, he was burned by a jolt of 30,000 volts. He fell back to the cinder ground, face first, and after he regained consciousness he broke Into violent muscular spasms, that, I understood later. It took three men to hold him down. He was then rushed to the Copper Cliff hospital, where he barely clung to life for several days. Here he remained for the rest of the summer. He had many severe burns on his feet, his hands, and his face and on some parts of his body. He also lost the sight in one eye permanently. I went to see him often at the hospital, and as he was recovering, he seemed to be enjoying himself In the company of the jovial nurses who attended him. In fact, he became romantically involved with one of them, and about two years later they were married. Her name was Marj Wiber.

Meanwhile, my sister Katie, who had been studying as a missionary at a Bible College in Three Hills, Alberta, was now at Niagara Falls, where she was getting her last minute instructions from the Missionary center before embarking for Colombia, South America, to convert the natives. She sent me a card inviting me down for a few days visit before leaving. On Saturday, August 1, I took an overnight train for Toronto, about 300 miles away, where Katie met me at the Union Station at 6:45 A.M. After having breakfast together, we immediately went to the docks and boarded the steamship "Cayuga" for Niagara Falls. After disembarking we took the special elevator at the Falls to see the Whirlpool Rapids, then boarded the "Maid of the Mist", a recreational boat that took us as close as was feasible to the bottom of both the American Falls and also the Canadian Falls. After a grand tour of Niagara Falls and a good chicken dinner, we caught the bus to Queenstown, boarded the "Cayuga" again and were back in Toronto at 9:00 P.M.

Next day I slept till noon (at Katie's missionary house) and Katie brought me breakfast in bed. We then took in several sites in the then beautiful city of Toronto. (It was then still uninfested with mud peoples.) We took a lot of pictures and saw the Parliament buildings, the zoo, and went through a museum. After dinner we went to "All People's Church" - Katie's sponsor, where some of her friendly but overly zealous cohorts vainly tried to convert me before I might get away.

Next day we covered some more interesting sites, the most outstanding of which was Casa Loma, a lovely castle built by entrepreneur Sir Henry Pendleton.

At 11:00 P.M. that night I kissed Katie goodbye and boarded the train back to Sudbury. Except for a short two-day visit in May of 1943 I was not to see her again for another 15 years. By this time she had married another missionary by the name of Herbert Snider while in Colombia and would be the mother of eight kids.

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As a romantic reflection of the different girl friends I had known at that period of my life (I was 24) I made the following entry in my little blue-green book.

Tuesday, July 21, 1942. Some day when I am established in Germany and have sufficient money, I intend, in memory of all the girls I have loved and left behind me, and also to recreate those beautiful impressions, to buy records of all those songs that I associate with the memory of each one.

1. Victoria Neufeld - "0 Genevieve", "Drifting and Dreaming", "When my Dream Boat Comes Home".

2. Elsie Fell - "Little Old Lady".

3. Erna Martens - "Sweet Bunch of Daisies".

4. Mary MacRorte - "Let's Sail to Dreamland".

5. Caroline George - "Woodbecker's Serenade".

6. Lily Zacharias - "Two Sleepy People", "You Smile and the Angels Sing", "Beer Barrel Polka", "Little Sir Echo", "Scatterbrain".

7. Verna Schmidt - "In an Old Dutch Garden".

8. Phyllis Bowie - "Down Argentine Way", "Tales From Vienna Woods", "Blue Danube", "Zwel Herzen Im Drel Vlertel Takt".

Apparently my romantic interests were very much alive, and so was my dream to one day live in Germany. It had been my dream ever since 1939 to settle in Germany, become an engineer, marry a beautiful blonde German "maedel", and live happily ever after. As we all know, history intervened and changed the course of my life, as it was destined to do to hundreds of millions of others.

* * * * *

On September 10, Tiny Thompson, Robbie (my foreman Clayton Robertson) and I loaded up the maintenance truck and departed for one of Inco's hydro-electric power plants to do some meter and controls restructuring. It was a beautiful, rustic area that was far enough away from all the smelters and contamination that polluted the Sudbury area. It was green, luxuriant and pristine, about 50 miles distant from Sudbury, and it was called High Falls. About half a mile up the river was the Big Eddy, as the dam and the power plant itself were called. It had some of the biggest generators I had ever seen at that time - a series of 8000 KVA (or about 9400 HP) babies.

We were to stay here a little less than two weeks. Although it was a lonely, isolated area out in the woods, it was a pleasant respite from the hustle and bustle of Sudbury. Mostly we worked, many times as much as 14 and 15 hours a day, but I had no complaints. I was logging in a lot of overtime, for which I got paid time and a half. In fact, it was Robbie, the foreman, who had been with the company for 20 years who complained. He was on straight salary, and he complained to me that I was drawing down more money than he was, a rank injustice, he claimed. No problem of mine, I told him. Take it up with the company president.

While I was at High Falls, Jim Dodd got out of the hospital and went back to the Paquettes, the French family where he and I had been boarding before he had his big accident and where my things were still stored. The college term at the U. of Manitoba was coming up in less than two weeks and we had plans to make. I sent in my seven days notice to the company, as was required.

On Sunday, September 27, I kissed Mrs. Vera Walman goodbye. She had been our cheerful landlady and cook who had kept us in tasty victuals during our short and pleasant stay. Tiny and I went back to Sudbury by car (driven by somebody else) and I arrived at the Paquette boarding house at ten that night to see Jim Dodd again. The next day Jim and I went to Copper Cliff to wind up our affairs, collected our pay, sold any kit and caboodle we had to a second hand store, and were off on the train to Toronto at 11:05 that night.

The next day we did some site seeing in Toronto, and also in Niagara Falls the following day. While in Toronto we were joined by another "U" student, a blonde Swede by the name of Orville Swenson, who was also going back to Winnipeg. From here on out we took a southerly route by bus to tour the northern fringe of the United States. We crossed the border at Sault Ste. Marie, went on to Erie, Pa., then to Buffalo, to Cleveland, and on to Chicago. We made a stopover at Chicago, where we visited the Field Museum, went to the top of the Wrigley Building, and to several other places, taking pictures all the while. Next we rolled on to Minneapolis, St. Paul, where we again stopped and saw the sights. Here I bought a leather brief case and a new camera.

We finally crossed the border back into Canada at Emerson, Manitoba, and arrived in Winnipeg on October 3, 1942, where we immediately checked in at the St. Regis Hotel. It had been an eventful summer, and Jim and I were now ready to tackle the U. of M. and our final year of electrical engineering.

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Milestone Sixteen: Fourth Year Engineering at the University of Manitoba 1942-1943

Whereas the fourth year, now in Winnipeg, was interesting enough and academically rewarding, it was not socially as congenial as had been the three previous years in Saskatoon. Somehow, it was less warm, less comfortable. Winnipeg seemed colder and less accommodating. The first thing Jim Dodd and I did when we arrived in Winnipeg was to look over the roster of boarding houses on the recommended list put out by the University. We happened to choose one run by a family named Saygol. That was the first dumb mistake we made and we should have known better. Although they initially seemed very friendly and accommodating, it wasn't too long before we found out they were Jews, and not too long after that before their nasty characteristics began to surface. Staying at the same place were five snotty, highbrow senior college girls studying Home Ec. at the same University. Staying next door were four of our engineering classmates from the U. of Sask., who were bent on raising all the hell they could. Soon a hassle developed between us, the landlord, the girls, and the fellows next door. Before the end of the first term we gave the landlord two weeks written notice we were moving, which threw this bug-eyed Jew into a tantrum, but leave we did.

Another unpleasant event for me was the discovery that there was no Air Crew Training program here, and I would have to attend C.O.T.C. at Osborne Barracks, Minto Field, whether I liked it or not. I did not like it. (Due to his serious accident the previous summer, Jim was 4F, so this did not apply to him.)

For these reasons and others, the first term was somewhat depressing, a big part of it being that all the social contacts I had had in Saskatoon were missing here. The one compensating aspect was that the classes, most of which now concerned some phase of electronics or electricity, were more interesting.

In any case, by December 19 I had written my last midterm exam, checked out of the Saygol compound, and at 10:15 that evening was on board a train bound for Saskatoon, to see Phyllis again. She met me at the C.P.R. station at 3:30 the next afternoon, and I was invited to stay at the Bowie home. It was great to see Phyllis again. As usual, she had some bizarre new stories to tell me, most of which weren't true.

I had promised the folks back home I would spend Christmas with them. After four most pleasant days with Phyllis, two days before Christmas I caught the train to Herschel. There I again made the rounds. On Christmas eve we all went to the Annual Mennonite Christmas Concert at the church. On Christmas day we had a big goose dinner at Korni and Martha's. Two days later we were all at Sarah and Peter's place to have a second big goose dinner with all the trimmings. Luckily in those days I had no trouble with putting on weight! Then on December the 30th I was back on the train for Saskatoon to see Phyllis again and on New Year's day we had a big turkey dinner at the Bowie's.

On the fifth of January I was back in Winnipeg again arriving at 8:45 in the morning. Somehow Winnipeg in the wintertime seemed more dreary and colder than Saskatoon, and I was not in the best of spirits. To make things worse, Jim and I had to find a new place to stay, since we had terminated our previous place two weeks ago. When I finally got in contact with Jim I found that the poor fellow had contracted chicken pox and was quarantined in the King George Hospital. He was to stay there for more than two weeks.

This left the business of locating a place up to me. I finally found a place at a Mrs. Keating s, at 82 Spence Street. Next day I went to bring Jim some chocolates and some of his things. Finally, the next day I was back at classes, two days late. All this time the weather was getting colder.

Meanwhile, the war in Europe was going on and on, hot and heavy, and the German position was worsening. At this time, however, I still felt Germany would win. I did not give up the German dream, but the future looked uncertain. Since we were coming towards the end of our term, the pressure from several quarters became heavier to sign up in one of the services upon graduation. The military machine needed more engineers, in particular. And anyway, the draft was in full force and the only reason we were not already in the armed forces was due to the fact we were presumed to be pursuing a technical education essential to the winning of the war.

I was hostile to the whole situation. Even when we were asked to become voluntary blood donors, while just about every able-bodied man and woman complied, I refused. Towards the end of the term the pressure to sign up for the armed forces increased. Every Engineering graduate did, in fact sign up, except for two of us, but, strangely enough, for exactly opposite reasons. One was a Jew by the name of Saul Bronstein, who connived to stay out because he was a coward, and like most Jews would rather see someone else do the fighting and bleeding. I, on the other hand, was determined not to fight for a cause I was against, when really I wanted to fight on the other side. As usual I was bucking the tide of contrived public opinion. I was hauled into Dean Fetherstonhaugh's office for a lecture. He strongly admonished me to sign up. The Army, Navy and Air Force all needed engineers, he told me. There would be dire consequences for me if I did not. I refused.

Jim Dodd, although he was ideologically against the war also, had no problems. For the same reasons he did not have to attend C.O.T.C., due to his tragic accident in Sudbury the summer before, he had a 4F category and was exempt from the draft.

There was an interesting fellow engineer in our class by the name of Phil Mees, who was from the United States. He kept telling us about the fabulous jobs that were available south of the border. By this time, both Jim and I had determined we would go to the States after graduation, should the war still be on. There was one hitch. Before you could even get out of Canada you had to have a Labor Exit Permit, which said. In effect, that if your abilities were needed to contribute to the war effort, your chances of getting permission to leave the country were practically nil. For a young man, and especially a graduate engineer, it was next to impossible to get such a permit. Jim and I both applied and were rejected. However, Jim, crafty fellow that he was, somehow connived to convince them that his bad eye needed special medical attention such as he could only get in the States, and somehow, shortly after graduation Jim did indeed find himself in Cleveland, Ohio, and a good job with Brush Development Co.

Since most able-bodied men were now in the services, many of the large companies were now hurting for qualified male employees, especially engineers and trained technical personnel. There was avid competition for such prospects as remained, and some of the large companies sent out scouts to the various university campuses to recruit whatever graduates they could. One of these was Northern Electric, from Montreal. They represented the equivalent of Western Electric in Canada. There were other scouts, and I listened to several offers. Finally, I decided to go with Northern Electric when I graduated, and I signed a letter of intent with them. This was about a month before the end of the term, and there was still a lot of work to be done in the classroom.

One of the jobs left to do was to write our thesis. At this time television still seemed like a far-off technical dream of the future. I saw it as an immense potential that would come into being shortly after the end of the war. Jim Dodd, Charlie Muirhead and I combined in a joint project to construct a crude apparatus that had some of the basic principles of television embodied in it. Based on it, we wrote our thesis, called "Theory of Television". It consists of 43 typewritten pages, and I still have a bound copy of it today. The profs evidently thought we did all right, since we received an A- grade on it.

By the 25th of April I had handed in my thesis, handed in my C.O.T.C. uniform and finished writing all my final exams in electrical engineering. The next day I took a medical exam by an accredited Dr. O. Waugh for Northern Electric. I passed that also, and signed up with this company. I was through with Winnipeg. There were only the graduation exercises left.

However, since I had a certain number of credits with the University of Saskatchewan for my Arts and Science year of 1935-36 and the class in Education in the summer of 1938, plus all my science classes accrued in engineering over the previous three years, I had enough credits to obtain a degree in Arts and Science from the University of Saskatchewan as well. So I had a choice as to which graduation to attend, since both of them were approximately on the same day. I opted for Saskatoon and the University of Saskatchewan. But that was a few weeks later.

Back to Herschel to stay with the family for a few days. It was a wet and snowy spring. I spent the time lazily, doing some reading, visiting old friends, helping my brothers with some of the farm work. Then off to Saskatoon to see Phyllis for a few days. She had some drama studies appointment in Melfort, Saskatchewan for the summer. She kept talking about marriage. I saw her off on the train, then returned to Herschel again.

On May 14 I was back in Saskatoon again for graduation exercises. I stayed with the Bowles again, but Phyllis was not there. She had left me a graduation present. The Graduation Ceremonies were held in the huge Third Avenue Church. There was a tea party in the afternoon. Then the grand graduation dance at S'toon's finest - the Bessborough Hotel. At the tea party I happened to meet a cute girl by the name of Helen Bubniuk, and she became my date for the dance that night. Despite no Phyllis, a good time was had by all.

Back to Herschel, and after a few more days on the farm, on May 20th Henry drove me to the railroad station at Herschel and I embarked for a new venue   Montreal and Northern Electric.

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Milestone Seventeen: Montreal and Northern Electric

On May 20th my brother Henry drove me to the station, and for $50.75 I purchased a railroad ticket to Montreal, Quebec, the land of the French Canadians. On the way out to Montreal I made two stops. One was in Winnipeg to see Jim Dodd, who was still negotiating for his entry into the United States. The other stop was in Toronto to see my sister Katie who was still staying at the World Wide Evangelism center and being further programmed for her assignment in Colombia, South America. After staying in Toronto for two days, sleeping at World Wide, and doing some more sightseeing in Toronto, I left for Montreal on the morning of May 24.

When I arrived in Montreal at 6:45 that evening, it was a beautiful, pleasant day. As I walked down the main drag of the city, St. Catharine s Blvd., I felt exhilarated, much as I had felt eight years earlier when I first arrived in Saskatoon to start my first year of college education at the age of seventeen. I again felt like I had the world by the tail and was entering into a brand new adventure. I had successfully completed my four years of electrical engineering and had my degree locked up. I had a good paying white-collar job assured to me in my chosen profession of electronic engineering. Montreal was the largest and most exciting city in Canada, and it was all mine to explore and enjoy. I felt that adventure awaited and I was free to make any number of choices in whatever direction suited me best.

After checking In at the St. James Hotel and having a good dinner, I went to a movie and saw a double feature, "Now Voyager" with Bette Davis and Paul Henreld, and "I Live on Danger."

Next day I checked in at Northern Electric. They were a huge and well-established manufacturing complex which at that time occupied a position in Canada similar to that of Western Electric in the United States of that same period. Besides manufacturing millions of telephones, telephone cable, and thousands of other accessories that go with the telephone business, they were also deep into the radio and electronics business. As I had requested, I was assigned to the Electronics Dept., in which there was a considerable amount of research going on. My Immediate boss was a mousy little man by the name of Ernie Kelsey. Northern Electric at that time was up to their eyebrows in war contracts, as was Just about every other company with manufacturing facilities, operating on a cost plus 10%, plus what ever else they could pad, and the larger the payroll the better.

The following day it drizzled and I spent most of it walking the streets looking for a place to stay. I found one at 462 Wood Ave. West, a boarding house run by a fading divorcee in her middle forties, who, nevertheless, still managed to put up a fairly good front, false eyelashes and all. Her name was Peg.

The first week at Northern Electric was spent in familiarizing new recruits with "the system"; how N.E. worked; visiting all the various departments both in and outside the Electronics Dept.; meeting the various heads of departments; then writing up notes of what I observed and remembered. This process took all of the first week. One of the department heads I met at that time was Bunn Sheffield, a congenial up-and-coming young executive, whom I was to see much more of at his home at a later date, due to his most attractive sister-in-law. But I am getting ahead of my story.

After settling in at Peg's place, I bought a second hand short wave set ($65.00) so I could listen to short wave broadcasts directly from Europe without first having it processed by our local media. I could now listen to broadcasts from both Britain and Germany - I was especially interested in what the latter were saying. During that summer, although established in a job in Montreal, my dream of living in a victorious, rejuvenated Germany was still very much alive. In fact, I still toyed with the idea of joining the Air Force, flying over and parachuting down onto German soil, to be captured, then to convince them that I had purposely done what I had done in order to join their side and fight for the sacred cause. However, I was never quite sure whether I was serious or whether It was only a fantasy. I did go so far as to check in at the R.C.A.F. headquarters on July 5th, and talk to the commanding officer there by the name of A. R. Smith. Nothing came of it, however. As the war dragged on and as I became more and more involved in the local circle of people in Montreal, the more that dream faded.

In the meantime, Peg and I had many long-winded philosophical discussions on many subjects, not the least of which was religion. She was a fluent talker and had a hearty belly laugh. Furthermore, she was quite intelligent, whereas none of the rest of the boarders could be ranked very high in that category. As far as I was concerned, ourconversations, which turned more and more into debates, were no more than an exercise in intellectual discourse. But that religious issue seemed to bug her, and she kept coming back to it again and again. Although I had not given religion that much thought at the time and was not that well informed on it, I had, of course, made up my mind years ago that religion as such was a phony, man-made concoction, and not worthy of serious consideration by intelligent people such as myself. Even so, I drove home what arguments I had available with devastating effects. When I candidly told her that Christianity was nothing more than an anachronistic collection of hocus-pocus, only fit for the superstitious and the gullible, this really cut her to the quick. After sulking for a few days, she told me she wanted me to leave. Undaunted, I said, fine, I didn't care for her cooking that much anyway, and moved out. I'm not sure what upset her most, the fact that I was winning most of the brownie points in our arguments, or the fact that my unassailable logic had raised some serious doubts in her own mind about the credibility of the make-believe games she had been playing.

I relocated at 1122 St. Catherine s St., fairly close to the downtown section of Montreal. The landlady was a Mrs. Aquinn, a congenial but quiet elderly woman. Staying in the same house were about seven or eight McGill University students, most of them from the United States, and most of them studying medicine. This created a more lively, (if not uproarious) and intellectual atmosphere, since most of these boys were in my age bracket and on my intellectual level. The horseplay and debates that ensued at the dinner table at night were sometimes more boisterous than a barrel of monkeys.

That summer I covered quite a lot of territory in exploring Montreal and its surrounding environs. I visited its museums, of which it had many. I visited its more outstanding cathedrals for which Montreal is famous. (In all this, the reader must remember, I am speaking in the past tense, as it was at a period of more than 45 years ago.) Throughout Montreal at that time there were more than 300 churches. Many of them were internationally famous - the Cathedral of Notre Dame, St. James Cathedral, Christ Church Cathedral, and the Oratory of St. Joseph, a noted Catholic pilgrimage shrine, to name a few. I explored McGill University. I took a St. Laurence River cruise in one of the large excursion boats. I took in some of Montreal's many cultural events, such as the opera "Lohengrin", some light operas, the Don Cossack Choir, and even the Burlesque Theatre. I Joined a public speaking class at McGill University, and also a radio design class at the same university. I even gave a speech on "The Future of Electronics" at the public speaking class.

During Northern Electric's annual summer vacation period (the whole plant was put on standby at a given time) I spent a week at Camp Otoreke north of Montreal and near St. Agathe, up in the beautiful Laurential Mountains. This was run by the Montreal branch of the "Y" and offered an excellent rustic outing on Lake Otoreke, with lots of fun and games, such as swimming, boating, tennis, etc. But the biggest plus was the good-sized assembly of fine young people, most of whom were in my age bracket, and with whom romance was the most popular game of all.

All the while, I was monitoring the progress of the war, which was not at all going well for my side. On July 25th, the headlines read "Mussolini Quits". The next day Marshall Bagdoglio took over and started negotiating surrender with the "Allies". On August 11th Churchill and Roosevelt met in Quebec City in a summit to plan the total destruction of Germany, of Europe, and of the White Race, and of how these traitors would like to carve up the carcass at the end of the war.

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As I got settled into my job, I found that there were a number of other former students I had known that were now also employed by Northern Electric. One of them was my buddy, Charlie Muirhead, who had been a partner with me in compiling our thesis on television at the university of Manitoba. Another was Nell Vanular, also from Manitoba. Nell was rooming with another young man by the name of Ray Martin. In the latter part of 1943 the four of us formed a sort of "rat pack" in many of our social activities. One Saturday night, November the 13th to be exact, the four of us were bowling at a large alley downtown called Karry's. Suddenly the place was swarming with Mounties - the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. They were there to round up any unregistered draft dodgers. Every able-bodied young man had to have an identity card showing he had registered for the draft and what his status was. Since most of the French Canadians were hostile to the British, all British, and also against the war as such, many had refused to do so. Although I had done all I could to stay out of a war I was also against, I had nevertheless registered, and had the legal status of being occupied in essential industry and so was at least temporarily exempt. However, it so happened that this particular evening I had forgotten to take my wallet along, in which the registration card was located. So there I was, swept up in the net with a lot of angry, muttering young "Frogs", as the French were derisively called by the Anglos. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police loaded us up into a number of paddy wagons and hauled us off to the police station to be interrogated. When it finally came to my turn I explained to them that I had a legitimate card, but had forgotten my wallet. In the meantime, at my request, the three other fellows had gone back to my room at Mrs. Aquinn's to pick up my wallet. When they finally returned with it, the Mounties apologized and let me go on my way.

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At this time, as the war dragged on and on, my ideals were being sorely tested. They were beginning to fade into a gray area as to what my goals might be for the future. It didn't look as though Germany would be in the picture anymore. I began to look more towards the United States for my future career and domicile. I became less responsible and more hedonistic.

Nor was I too interested in my job at Northern Electric anymore. At the large office where I was ensconced there were islands of six desks, three facing three, packed together. To the right of me was a Jew by the name of Harry Schwartz, also an electronics engineer. To the left of me was a technician by the name of Tony. Across from me was Josephine "Joe" Sheffield, a sister to Bunn Sheffield mentioned earlier. She was sort of a librarian and assembled technical literature for us. Catacorner from me was another Jew by the name of Larry Merson, an electronics engineer, and at the other corner of our island was Jack Hayles, a personable young engineer from Vancouver, B.C. We were all engaged in "research" of one type or another. Back of the large office room was a laboratory in which we puttered away at our various projects, the direction and purpose of which was designated from time to time by our various department heads under whom each of us worked. I did not see any great purpose in most of these projects, and soon got the feeling that we were on payroll more for the purpose of increasing that 10% plus margin than in achieving any new great technical breakthroughs.

Be that as it may, every mid-morning and every mid- afternoon we had a 15 minute "smoke break", during which time we were allowed to smoke. After a while, foolishly, I began to take up smoking, along with the rest of the crowd. This I was to continue for the next fifteen years, when I quit abruptly and decisively. But that is another story.

At the beginning of 1944 Charlie Muirhead moved in with me as my roommate. The three of us, Charlie, Nell Vanular and I joined the M.A.A. Club - the Montreal Amateur Athletic Club. Also, two other University of Saskatchewan engineering graduates working for N.E. joined. Their names were Bill Anderson and Joe McGuire, but they were not in our inner circle. The M.A.A. Club had a fine headquarters building not too far from where Charlie and I stayed. It was replete with a good-sized indoor swimming pool, a bowling alley, indoor squash courts, pool tables, a dining room, a lounge, a dance hall, a library and other accommodations.

One day, while Bill Anderson, Joe McGuire and Nell Vanular were in the lounge and somewhat inebriated, they evidently were overheard by some ladles in the same lounge being loud, rowdy and using some foul language. This was duly reported by the ladies to the President of the club. The president called the three boys on the carpet and threatened to expel them. The boys evidently didn't help matters any by being belligerent and as can be expected, they were duly expelled. This left only Charlie Muirhead and myself of our group as members in good standing, but we did not renew at the end of the year's tenure.

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As I mentioned earlier, Joe Sheffield sat directly across from my desk in our office island. She was a highly capable and intelligent woman about six years older than I. Naturally, we had many conversations, most of them interesting and informative. She even fixed me up with a tennis date, and invited me over to her apartment one day for a home cooked dinner. But there was no romantic interest, at least not on my part.

One bright day, into the office skipped her sister-in-law, who also worked for N.E. She whirled in like a spring breeze with a big smile, a musical laugh and bright sparkle in her eye. Her name was Beth Ralston. She attracted my immediate attention.

Within a day or so I was on the phone asking her for a date. Maurice Fast, an Alumnus of the University of Saskatchewan, was organizing a dance for the Alumni assembled in Montreal and it happened to coincide with my birthday on February 20. I asked Beth to be my date and she accepted. We immediately hit it off. She reciprocated by asking me to be her date at a bash the Montreal Bachelorettes were having a week or so later and I was most happy to oblige. From there on we were off and running. She became my steady and my participation in the former "rat pack" soon became extremely former.

We participated in many interesting and enjoyable events. We went siding in the Laurential Mountains about 80 miles north of Montreal. We went to any number of dances. We went to Camp Otoreke during the summer of 1944 (where I had been the previous summer). We played tennis, we bowled, we saw the opera "Carmen" and we took a cruise up the St. Lawrence River on an excursion boat. We went on many walks up to the top of Mount Royal. It was a most enjoyable relationship.

Soon the relationship became more serious and she began to talk of marriage. I didn't really feel I was ready for it yet. I still felt footloose and fancy-free. My hopes were now directed more and more towards moving to the United States after the war was over. In fact, I had even targeted the city - Los Angeles, California.

But the war dragged on and on. I remember that while we were at Camp Otoreke, I heard with dismay of the attempted assassination of Hitler at his military bunker on July 20th. The German dream was sinking fast.

By August I was rapidly yielding to the idea of marriage. We became engaged. On August the ninth I went to Birk's Jewelers and bought her a diamond engagement ring.

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After being on the job in Montreal for a year, I seriously began to re-assess both of these factors. As my hopes for Germany faded towards the latter half of 1944, as my interest in my job declined, so in direct proportion did my interest and enthusiasm for a future in the United States dramatically rise. I had no enthusiasm being stuck in a salaried job with Northern Electric for the rest of my life, nor did I wish to live in Montreal. Interesting as the city may be, I thought, I did not like the gloomy, over-cast winters, nor the hot muggy summers. Nor did I care to live in a polyglot, dual language city of predominantly French Canadians in an ongoing hassle with the British element who controlled most of the industry and economy. (Actually Jews, but I was not that much aware of this fact at that time.)

So more and more I began to explore the American scene. In this respect Jim Dodd was not only a big help, but also an inspiration. As a traveling representative of Brush Development Co., he made contacts in many of the major cities in the United States, and also touched bases frequently in Montreal. I wrote to a number of companies in the electrical business, with now more of an aim as a technical representative rather than as an engineer. I found the response was very good. Since war production in 1944 was in high gear and since most able-bodied men had now been drafted into the service, the demand for young engineers and/or technical men with a degree and some experience was high. There still always remained this one hitch - I needed a Labor Exit Permit to leave the country. On August 5, I again went to see the Chairman of the Canadian Mobilization Board, and used all the persuasive arguments I could muster to get that permit, but it was still no go. However, I was undaunted. Sooner or later I would get that permit, and anyway the war couldn't last too much longer.

I decided to make a foray into the United States and look into some of these companies with whom I had been corresponding. One of the letters was from Sperry Gyroscope in New York, and they even offered to pay my fare if I came down for an interview. Jim happened to be in town at that time. On Sept. 26 I decided to take up Sperry's offer and go to New York. Jim decided to come along and see if perhaps he could improve his status, a situation that seemed perpetual with him. We wired Sperry to make room reservations for us (hotel accommodations were tight during the war) and at 9:25 P.M. we were on the train to New York. Beth was there to see us off. We arrived in the Big Apple at 8:45 in the morning of the next day.

We talked to some of the higher executives of Sperry, who made us various offers. We also scouted the possibilities with a few other companies the next day, especially Federal Telephone and Radio. The following day we went to Newark and contacted a few more companies. That night we took a pullman from New York and were back in Montreal on Saturday 9:05 A.M. September 30. That night Jim, Charlie Muirhead and I took our respective girl friends out to dinner at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, discussed our foray in New York and proceeded to get inebriated.

When I went back to work at Northern Electric on Monday morning, I had some explaining to do about my absence last week. Whatever excuse I offered didn't set very well, but I didn't care. I felt pretty independent and didn't care too much about my job anyway. I was transferred to another department. Systems. My first job was to lay out the grounds for a radio transmitter, ground wires for the major antennas, etc. It entailed quite a bit of surveying on the grounds and I was glad to be outdoors.

I pressed on with the American adventure. On Sunday October 22 after Jim, Charlie Muirhead, Beth and I had dinner at Murray's Restaurant, I boarded the train for Cleveland to see Brush Development Co. for whom Jim worked. This time Jim did not go along. I arrived in Cleveland at 10:45 in the morning after having a cloak and dagger, hide and seek escapade with a Canadian Immigration official, one of whom was now on board every train crossing the border to make sure that none of their valuable subjects escaped to the United States. I had been warned that security at the border had been tightened considerably, and that it was not now possible to go more than 20 miles past the border without having that damned Labor Exit Permit. To forestall such a problem I had bought two tickets, one to a little town en route just inside the American border, and another one from there on to Cleveland. Sure enough, as we were nearing the border the immigration official boarded the train, went down the cars eyeing every passenger with his professional scrutiny. When he came to me he sat down on the seat opposite. He had a real mean look on his face. He asked to see my ticket. Then he gave me the third degree - where was I going? What was my business? and on and on. I sat there and sweated and lied like a trooper. I told him I was going to see my family outside this little American town. What was their name? Where did they live? Name? Klassen. Lived about 15 miles east of town. Round and round, for 15 minutes. I was getting in deeper and deeper. Finally we arrived at this little town on the American side of the border and I got off and he got off. It was midnight and it was dark. I walked to the other side of the train where it was even darker. When I saw he had walked out of sight I jumped back on the train again in another car down the line and was on my way.

Once in Cleveland, I met with three of the top officers of Brush. Things looked favorable. I also went to see the U.S. Employment Service and got a clearance card from them and also a Statement of Availability (but not from the Canadian Mobilization Board.) I also went to the U.S. Immigration Office and that hurdle, too, did not seem insurmountable. On October 25, I left Cleveland and took the train back to Montreal.

As I crossed the border that night, that same Canadian Immigration officer was making the rounds again checking everybody out. He immediately recognized me as the fellow who had conned him a few days earlier, saying that I was only going to see some relatives within a few miles of the border. He knew I had conned him and he gave me a severe dressing down, even threatened to run me in. But he didn't, and I proceeded on to Montreal, arriving there at 11:00 A.M.

When I went back to work at Northern Electric on the following Monday I got put on the carpet for my repeated absences, not only by Radford, my immediate supervisor, but I had the honor of being thoroughly chewed out by the great Mr. Peachy himself, who was head of the whole electronics division. He even threatened to fire me, but he didn't. I went back to running the transit and surveying the layout of the Transmitter Station.

This idea that the United States welcomed me but Canada wouldn't let me out, began to get to me. What the hell was this all about anyway? Was this another Russia? Were we in a Stalag, a slave labor camp? I was beginning to feel pretty independent about the whole situation, job or no job. My rebellious nature was beginning to come to the fore. To hell with them! I went to see a Jewish lawyer by the name of Max Bernfeld about getting a visa and hurdling those tyrannical restrictions. Nothing much came of that ploy. I still needed that damned Labor Exit Permit.

Beth had pressed for a wedding date and we finally agreed that June 15th, 1945, was to be the big day. As the time drew nearer, I began to have second thoughts. I still wasn't ready to take the big plunge. I was determined to first get squared away and get myself established in the United States, before or after the war was over. Besides, was Beth really the right girl? By the middle of March, I made up my mind and said no. There was a great flurry, the tears flowed, but I was obdurate.

The war was drawing to a close in Europe. On April 30, came reports that Hitler had committed suicide. By May the 7th rumors were flying around that an armistice was about to be declared. That afternoon as I went up town, the streets were crowded with what seemed like millions of people in a state of frenzy some drunk, all wild and irresponsible. The next day, the 8th, was declared a holiday, V-E day.

This further spurred me on to action. I again went back to see the War Mobilization Board to see if I could now get that Labor Exit Permit. After much hassle, the answer was still no.

Undaunted, on July 24, Charlie Muirhead and I decided to make another foray into the United States to line up a good job before they were all gone (we thought, since there would be a realignment of jobs at the end of the war.) We arrived In New York at 9:00 A.M. the next morning and checked in at the Harmony Hotel. Jim Dodd and his new wife Marj, happened to be in town also and we got together with them that night and had dinner in Newark. In the meantime, Charlie and I saw some employment agencies, made contacts with Burlingame Associates, International Standard Electric, and others. Nothing definite, but it looked promising, the salaries better than in Canada.

After two days, Charlie went back to Montreal. I went on to Cleveland with Jim and Marj, where they were now domiciled. I checked in at the Belmont Hotel, then called up Margo Bradov, a blonde I had been corresponding with. We agreed on a date for tomorrow. Meanwhile, I called several electrical companies, visited Reliance Electric and again visited Brush Development Co.

The afternoon of Saturday July 28, I spent with Margo. We went to a circus that was in town. We went on a motorboat ride at a lake, and we had a drink of Southern Comfort at the Punch & Judy, where I met her dad, who incidentally owned the joint.

After having lunch with Jim and Marj the next day, I boarded the train back to Montreal. All trains were now very crowded, what with a massive returning and/or shift of troops. The trains were also late. I finally got into Montreal next Monday at 11:00 A.M.

This trip to Cleveland and New York somehow irrevocably made up my mind I would be done with the East. I was going to go to California, legally or illegally, the sooner the better.

On Friday, August 10, I dropped into Radford's office and told him: "I'm quitting." Radford, who was my supervisor, told me I couldn't do that. I had to give at least two weeks notice. I went over his head to my old pal Mr. Peachey, who had threatened to fire me for my many absences only nine months earlier. I told him the same thing I quit, take it or leave it. We settled for Wednesday, August 15.

On August 14th the Japanese surrendered and again the streets were overrun with hordes of people in a wild state of jubilation and frenzy.

The next day was V-J Day and declared a holiday. I lost no time. I packed my things. At 4:00 In the afternoon I left the house and Charlie Muirhead accompanied me to the station. At 6:25 I was on the train to Utica-Cleveland to touch bases with Jim Dodd. I had no Labor Exit Permit, no visa, no passport, nothing but a railroad ticket and a few hundred bucks cash in my pocket. But I was headed for California, legally or illegally, and nothing was now going to stop me.

Against the Evil Tide - 19

Milestone Eighteen: California, Here I Come!

Next Back Home

The day after V-J Day I arrived in Cleveland and dropped in on Jim Dodd unannounced. As I walked into the yard, he was bent over working on his jalopy. (Not too many people owned a car at the end of the war.) I told him I was headed for California, come what may. Did he want to come with me? He said, yes, sure, but why didn't I wait a week or so In order that he could wrap up several loose ends. I said, no, I'm leaving tomorrow, with or without you.

Jim soon made up his mind. The next day, Friday, August 18, we both boarded a train for Chicago at 4:00 P.M., and arrived there at 9:25 P.M. At midnight we caught the Santa Fe California Limited and were on our way.

We arrived at Kansas City at 10:00 A.M., August 19, where I sent a postcard to my mother, and another to Charles Muirhead. We had lunch at Topeka at 4:00 P.M. and arrived at Dodge City at 9:30 that evening. While in Albuquerque, N.M. we had a lengthy stopover and while there, I happened to talk to immigration officials who were scrupulously surveilling and questioning any suspected Mexican wetbacks. This was back in 1945, and at that time the I.N.S. was still making an honest effort to keep out the Mexican hordes.

While there, I got my first impression of the hot, dry Southwest, and I liked It. I liked the aromatic smell of the pepper trees, of the blooming cactus, the oleanders and other flowering shrubs. It was August, the air was hot but dry, except in the railroad car, where it was hot and muggy. At this point we managed to change into an air-conditioned car, a new experience for me.

The morning of August 20, we crossed the border into California, and at 3:00 P.M. we disembarked at Los Angeles Union Station. We had arrived! I got that exhilarating, adventurous feeling again! I liked everything I saw, including Olvera Street and the Mexicanos.

We checked in at the Cecil Hotel on Main Street and immediately started scanning the want ads for employment opportunities. We collected a pocket full of nickels and before even the first day was over we were already making a number of calls from the pay phones to check out job opportunities. By the next day we had already made a few appointments and were talking to company heads. Our mode of travel was the streetcar, or by bus.

On September I we moved to the Wagner Hotel. On that day I also talked to a Mr. Ray Thompson, of Bardwell McAllister in Hollywood about a job, which three weeks later actually worked out. In the meantime we made dozens of phone calls, appointments and in general effectively covered the technical job market in the whole Los Angeles area, from Pasadena to Long Beach, from Santa Monica to the eastern limits of Los Angeles.

Bardwell McAllister had been a lighting company before the war, specializing In arc lights and other sophisticated lighting equipment for the movie industry. During the war it converted to war production and government contracts, and at present was working on a sophisticated B-29 trainer, which would simulate flight conditions for trainees while enjoying the safety of the ground. When I started work there on September 21, (approximately a month after arriving In Los Angeles) I was aware, as were the other employees, that this was now a dead-end contract which would at best last another six months. But the pay was good, and a job was a job. In the meantime, it offered a base from which I could scout for other jobs. Two weeks later I opened a bank account in Hollywood and deposited my second paycheck - $143.80. Progress! I had a Hollywood bank account. I felt like a full-fledged mogul.

Jim had also latched onto a job. He had initially come with me on a temporary basis, intending to go back to Cleveland after looking over the lay of the land. His wife was back in New York some place, still holding down a job. But now he decided to stay permanently. We started looking for cars to buy. On October 28, I bought a '34 Oldsmobile sedan, and Jim bought a '37 Pontiac coupe. The first thing I had to do was get a temporary beginner's permit to drive a car. I found I was on precarious ground - not having legal residence in the United States. The next thing that happened was I had a flat tire, and I needed four retreads. Then I needed the brakes relined. Next I needed new seat covers. Then it was something else. I soon found out that it cost money to own a car even if it was only - especially if it was a Jalopy.

By now Jim and I were taking in the sights and felt and acted like native Californians (everybody there was from someplace else.) We took in the sights. We went swimming in the Pacific Ocean, both at Long Beach, and also at Santa Monica. We now both had cars. We dated girls. I especially got chummy with a Marie Jansen who worked in the accounting office of Bardwell McAllister and had her eye on me.

In fact, I was driving down Hollywood Blvd. in the wee hours one night with Marie when a traffic policeman flashed his lights on me. It seems I was driving without my lights on. The lights on the car were so dim I hadn't noticed the difference, but the cop had. He asked for my driver's license. I showed him my temporary permit. The last thing in the world I needed at this point was a ticket and to be hauled into court. I apologized profusely for my carelessness and sweet-talked the cop out of charging me. He did not press it further and did not give me a ticket.

That little incident convinced me that my legal status was precarious and I had better clean up my act as soon as possible before I got into real trouble. Two weeks later I decided to do something about.

On November 29th I cashed my latest check from Bardwell McAllister, and withdrew what little money I had in the bank. I left my car with Don Campbell and his new wife, at whose house I had been staying. (He was a young engineer who also worked for B.A.) I explained my situation to Mr. Thompson and got temporary leave of absence from Bardwell McAllister without losing my job. At 11:55 P.M. that night I was on the Grand Canyon Limited headed for Chicago, then to Montreal, Quebec, to hopefully wade through all the necessary legal rigmarole to become a legal resident of the United States.

I had been in California just a little over three months, but I had made a few basic decisions - I liked it and I was coming back. Jim and his wife Marj saw me off at the station. The last thing I said to them was - "I shall return!" to quote a famous general.

Against the Evil Tide - 19

Milestone Eighteen: California, Here I Come!

Next Back Home

Against the Evil Tide - 20

Milestone Nineteen: I Make it Legal

Next Back Home

After stopping in Cleveland temporarily to take care of some affairs for Jim, I boarded the "Empire State" for Buffalo, then the "Maumer" on to Toronto, and finally to Ottawa, arriving at the latter at eight in the morning of December the fourth, 1945. The first place I headed for was the War Mobilization Board to try to obtain that much needed Labor Exit Permit which had for so long eluded me. I was all primed and loaded for bear to argue my case to the hilt, with all systems go. When I confronted the colonel in charge I gave an approximately 20 minute exhortation, non-stop. I claimed that to deny me the permit was an illegal repression; it was tyrannical not to allow citizens to leave the country; it had all the earmarks of a dictatorship; it was in direct contradiction of all the principles of democracy for which we supposedly fought a war for the last six years; and anyway, the war was now over. What possible reason could the Board now have for wanting to keep me here? The colonel listened patiently, and when I was all through he said, yes, the war is over. There is no problem. You can have your Labor Exit Permit. I was jubilant. Finally I had that elusive piece of paper.

Next I checked in at the Dunkirk Hotel and made a few phone calls. I called the American Consulate in Ottawa about an appointment to apply for a visa. They were booked solid for several weeks. I called Toronto. They were booked for two months. Next I called the Consulate in Montreal. Same story. I was getting desperate. I couldn't wait that long. Next I called Regina, Saskatchewan. Fine, no problem, no waiting time.

Before I left Ottawa I took care of two other items. I obtained my Canadian passport, and I received a clearance permit from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police HQ that I had no criminal record.

However, I had some unfinished business in Montreal that needed taking care of, such as picking up my trunk, and withdrawing the few hundred dollars I had in the bank. I arrived in Montreal on December 6, a week after I had left Los Angeles. There I checked in with the Carre family in Lachine, where Charlie Muirhead and I had been staying during the summer months. Charlie was still there, and so was Bobbie Carre, and the boys. They were all ears to hear all about Los Angeles and California.

After taking care of several chores in Montreal, I left two days later, heading for Regina, Saskatchewan, arriving at the latter at 7:10 P.M. on December 9. I had a cold and the weather was miserably cold, as it only can be in Saskatchewan. I checked in at the Champs Hotel.

First thing next morning I checked in at the American Consulate to apply for my visa. There I encountered a new roadblock I had not anticipated. The Consul, Mr. D.E. Cyphers, blandly informed me that I could not enter the United States unless it was under the auspices of an Alien Contract Labor permit, which meant that America needed some special skills or training that I might have that they could not obtain from their own ranks in the United States, a most difficult hurdle indeed. Whereas during the war there might have been any number of jobs available for engineers, that situation had now changed. War contracts were being cancelled left and right, and jobs terminated along with them. Furthermore, as servicemen were coming back and being discharged, there was now a more than ample supply of applicants.

I sent off two letters. One was to Charlie Muirhead to obtain a letter from Northern Electric as to what my qualifications were. Another was to R.J. Thompson of Bardwell McAllister as to what it was they needed in the way of technical skills that I had that they could not obtain otherwise. Then, figuring that this would be a long drawn out process, I decided I might as well go home to Herschel and stay with my relatives there rather than in some dreary hotel.

My brother Henry came to pick me up at the station in Herschel. After seeing the rest of the family I left for Saskatoon two days later to see my mother. She was in the hospital awaiting an operation. She was so happy to see me again.

When I got back to Herschel, I had a letter from Charlie telling me he didn't have the authority to write a letter such as I requested. I immediately called him long distance and exhorted him to get busy and find someone at Northern Electric who did. A week later I received the kind of letter from Charlie such as I had requested in the first place. I sent the letter on to D.E. Cyphers in Regina.

By this time it was Christmas Eve and we all went to the annual Christmas Concert at the Mennonite Church - just like old times again. It was the last such concert I was to attend there. The next day we all had a big Christmas dinner of plum soup, sausages and beef, at Henry and Annie's, and then at night we lit up the Christmas tree and sang songs.

Two days later I called D.E. Cyphers at the American Consulate in Regina. He said he needed a more specific description of my job in California. I sent a wire to that effect to R.J. Thompson in Hollywood and asked him to send the letter directly to the American Consulate in Regina. In this respect I found out later that my friend Marie Jansen at Bardwell McAllister had been a big help in getting out a speedy reply, for which I have been eternally grateful to her ever since.

On New Years Eve our assembled families had a big goose dinner at Korni and Martha's, after which I stayed over night at

Sarah and Pete's. Next morning, New Year's Day, at 10:40 in the morning I again boarded the train and left for Regina. I arrived there at 7:00 P.M. and checked in at the Kitchener Hotel. The weather was colder than ever. I couldn't wait to get back to sunny California.

Next day I went back to see Cyphers at the Consulate. He informed me that he had received a satisfactory letter from R.J. Thompson. He sent a wire to the State Department on my behalf. That afternoon I took my medical exam. On January 3, I filled out an application for my American Visa, then went to a show and at 11:55 P.M. I was on a train for Saskatoon to see my mother again.

At 6:25 A.M. I arrived in Saskatoon and immediately checked in at the King George Hotel. I went to see mother in the forenoon and while there I met Henry, Annie and Korni visiting at the hospital also. We had lunch together and then said goodbye. It would be many years before I would see them again. I stayed in Saskatoon another two days and saw mother several times again. She had had her operation and was feeling quite a bit better. It was to be the last time I was to see her, although, of course, I did not know it at the time. She died less than two years later.

On January 7th I entrained for Regina. I anticipated receiving my visa any day now and called the Consulate repeatedly. I also made dally airline reservations so that when my visa arrived I would not be delayed by having to wait for plane space. Finally, on January 9th, I received my visa, I had my passport, my Labor Exit Permit, my health certificate. In fact, my whole act put together. The next day, January 10th, I was on a plane to Calgary, where I changed planes. Then on January 11th I officially and legally entered the United States at Cutbank, Montana. There, after going through immigration and customs, I flew on to Salt Lake City, then to Las Vegas and on to Los Angeles. This was 1946 and the plane was a small two engine, prop driven crate that made many stops.

I arrived at the Burbank airport at about 11:00 o'clock that night. Jim and Marj were there to meet me. The first thing I said to them was, "I have returned", again quoting that famous general.

Against the Evil Tide - 20

Milestone Nineteen: I Make it Legal

Next Back Home

Against the Evil Tide - 21

Milestone Twenty: California The Settling-in Process

Next Back Home

So there I was, back in sunny California again! In a matter of less than two days I was transported from the miserably cold, dreary winter in Saskatchewan to the sunny clime of Southern California in the middle of January. It was again one of those rare periods in my life when I felt euphoric and optimism ran high.

True, I still had most of the major problems of my adult life to solve, which I mentioned earlier. But I had solved one of them, beautifully, I thought, and that was the matter of where I wanted to live. Furthermore, I had my job at Bardwell McAllister to go back to immediately, and although I realized it was temporary, it would serve the purpose adequately until such time as I could make a better placement. My hopes were high and California at the beginning of 1946 looked beautiful, real beautiful, to me.

And California of the immediate post-war period did have much to offer, although the signs of its coming dissolution and degeneration could even then be detected by the discerning eye. Since no new cars had been produced for the previous five war years, traffic was not yet any major problem. There weren't that many cars. There were still no freeways to worry about. The only one that existed in the whole Los Angeles area was the six-mile stretch of the Pasadena Freeway partially connecting Pasadena to a downtown Los Angeles.

Smog was not yet a major factor, but it was even then beginning to display its eye-irritating stench when the atmospheric conditions were right. True, there were a lot of Mexicans in the downtown section, and around the Olvera Street area, but they were still regarded as Mexicans and they knew their place. They were not organized, nor were they militant. The nigger situation was still insignificant and confined to a few slum areas. Welfare, which has enabled niggers to breed like cockroaches without working, had not yet raised its ugly head, although it, too, was in the making. The beaches were still very accessible and relatively clean, a real pleasure to go to.

Above all, the weather was balmy and warm even in the wintertime, compared to most of the country. The palm trees and the orange groves that proliferated over the landscape had a most exhilarating effect, at least on me. Evidently, all these attractions also excited millions of other people, not only Americans, but also Canadians and peoples from other lands. The mass migration was on, what with millions of footloose and fancy-free G.I.'s being discharged from the Armed Forces. California, and especially Los Angeles, became one of the prime magnets of the world. I was lucky, I told myself, that I got there ahead of the crowd.

Soon after I went back to work at Bardwell McAllister I was scouting for a better, more permanent job. I still had my tan-colored, broken down jalopy whose front wheel linkages were so loose the wheels would suddenly go into an uncontrollable shimmying every once in a while. The car would go into a spasm and oscillate from side to side. It could be very embarrassing at times, especially if I had a passenger. However, it was transportation.

I moved my domicile from Don Campbell's place to a fine location at 1348 Idlewood Road in Glendale. The house was of Spanish-Mediterranean style with a red tiled roof, one of the characteristics of Southern California that fascinated me. It was owned by a Mrs. Connors, a member of the "I am" people.

To pursue further my problems and adventures with my broken down Jalopy at this time, I distinctly remember two different occasions when old Betsy failed me, and caused me considerable embarrassment.

Also working at Bardwell McAllister was a beautiful young girl by the name of Joan Busch, who was aspiring to become an actress. (All girls in Hollywood were, it seemed.) She had the leading part in a dinner theater melodrama called "Under the Gaslights", a theater located at 732 Highland in Hollywood. She gave me some gratis tickets and invited me to see the show, which I did. One thing led to another and soon I had a date with her one fine Sunday. On the way over, the clutch broke down and I was temporarily stranded. My date was ruined, and unfortunately, was never resumed.

On another occasion, I happened to wander over to the old San Gabriel Mission to look it over. (The old Spanish missions of California had a special attraction for me, and at one time or another I believe I explored practically all of them.) While at the San Gabriel Mission I found that a rehearsal was going on for the production of a musical outdoor play to be staged at the mission. It was one of those historical dramas reflecting back to the days of Old Mexico and the Spanish Conquistadors, history that supposedly happened around the mission about two centuries ago. The Prima Donna putting on the production spotted me and said I was just the right man to play a certain part in the play, a Spanish Don somebody. Surely, I had acting experience? No, not really. Well, I would do, anyway. So I said, why not? and joined the company.

Several weeks and rehearsals later, my jalopy again broke down on the way to a very important rehearsal. When I arrived about two hours late, the temperamental Prima Donna was roaring mad at my ostensible unreliability. I didn't bother to explain. And so ended my incipient acting career, nipped in the bud.

Two months after returning to California I left Bardwell McAllister and took a job as a technical sales representative with a manufacturer's representative, run by a certain Jerry Miller and his wife. He had a small office located at 1051 Havenhurst Drive, in the Hollywood area. My job was to promote, demonstrate and sell, some kind of sophisticated oscillograph that had very limited application for a few specialized technical companies. I was paid $400.00 a month, and the gasoline for my car, which was 18 to 20 cents a gallon in those days. I was to get a small override commission for the units I sold, said units being extremely expensive, but I felt highly optimistic, nevertheless. The job lasted for two months, during which time I demonstrated the unit probably a dozen or so times, but sold not a single unit.

However, I made a lot of contacts and had learned the layout of all the main thoroughfares from Santa Monica to Whittler, from Long Beach to San Fernando and beyond. Furthermore, the Job had given me the opportunity to learn something about the manufacturer's rep business and also the names and locations of most of the leading electronics companies.

This was the postwar period and there was much change and reshuffling going on in business and in Industry. The times were rife with opportunities and also studded with an equal number of booby traps. New businesses were being formed dally and businesses were also going broke at a record rate.

By the time I realized the Jerry Miller deal was a flop, I had already landed a new job with another manufacturer's rep called The W. Bert Knight Co., located at 908 Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles. It was a bigger and more substantial outfit and had already been well established during the war years. It represented about a dozen different national manufacturers in the electronics and supportive fields. It handled such lines as small transformers, vacuum tubes, condensers, resistors, and other parts used in the manufacture of radios and other electronic and electrical products. My job, however, was not in the electronic field, but to try to develop the industrial market, such as electric motor manufacturers, or whatever. Although my salary was not fixed, it varied somewhere between $500.00 and $700.00 a month, depending on the company's over all business. Besides Bert Knight himself, there were two other salesmen, Chuck Nace, who was Bert's brother-in-law, and Al Rissi. Two girls in the office doing the paperwork completed the staff.

I was now making more money than I had ever before, and soon I got rid of my old, broken down jalopy and bought a better car. It was a light blue Oldsmobile '98 coupe, a real powerhouse. It was pre-war, second hand, of course, but I felt like I was now riding around in style. The fellow I bought It from was a young Irish race horse jockey by the name of Gerald O'Steen.

What with a bigger car, a fairly well paying job, I soon began to feel like a native and enjoy many of the amenities of California life. Jim Dodd and his wife Marj had taken an apartment In the Los Angeles area at 5424 Denker Avenue and I spent a considerable amount of time with them, being invited for dinners and often staying overnight. We took a number of exploratory trips to different surrounding areas, all the way from Tijuana, Mexico, to Santa Barbara to the north. Jim had become interested in real estate and bought a scrubby lot in the La Crescenta area for $300.00. He soon found a house that needed to be moved to make way for the coming freeways. He moved it onto his lot to rebuild and remodel. In which project I often would help him on weekends. It was an endless project that he never did finish, but we had a lot of fun working at it.

Even before I had gone back to Canada I was dating a number of girls. With a bigger and better Oldsmobile that avocation became even more inviting, and I was playing the field. We went to the beaches, we went to the mountains, often as a foursome with Jim and Marj. I was even beginning to consider the idea of marriage.

My job with Bert Knight was interesting to the extent that I traveled much, made a lot of contacts, covered most of the territory of metropolitan Los Angeles. Bert Knight himself was a wealthy man and at this time bought a five-acre rancho in the middle of Encino, in the San Fernando Valley, only a stone's throw from where dark Gable had a similar layout. Bert's main forte in business was not his technical knowledge of condensers and vacuum tubes, but his lavish entertainment of company executives who came from out of town to visit the California scene "on business." On such occasions he would usually throw a party, at which we three salesmen were always present to enhance the image of a prosperous operation. Bert used to philosophize that there were three things dear to any man's heart good liquor, good food, and women, the latter not necessarily good. Also, the company would participate in a number of local trade shows, at which entertainment of the local executives, our customers, was a major endeavor.

Anyway, life was new, it was exciting, and I was even putting a few dollars In the bank. One day I walked into the First National Bank in Glendale to cash my check and deposit a hundred dollars or so into a savings account I had established. I was standing in one line, when I noticed a beautiful blonde girl with big blue eyes, a mass of wavy blonde hair and a vivacious smile at the window of the next cage. Wrong line, I thought. I took my check and deposit slip back to the counter in the middle of the room, fussed around for a minute or so and queued up at her window. Sure enough, there was an immediate rapport when I looked into those big blue eyes. We got into such a spirited conversation that when I walked away I had left my money on the counter of her window. She called after me, don't you want your money? Her name was Henrie Etta McWilliams.

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Milestone Twenty: California   The Settling-in Process

Against the Evil Tide - 22

Milestone Twenty-One: Romance, Marriage and Real Estate

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Once we had looked into each other's eyes across the counter of the teller's cage, we lost no time getting together. Even before I went back to pick up my money I had already asked her for a luncheon date and she agreed. It was a Saturday, and the bank closed at 12:00 noon. She said I could pick her up at 2:00 P.M. when they would be through with balancing the books.

We went to the Tarn O'Shanter Restaurant in Glendale. The lunch lasted for two hours. We even had a few highballs along with much conversation, in which we each reviewed our life history in brief. Things went so well we decided to get together again that same evening and go horseback riding.

I picked her up at her apartment at 7:30 that evening. She was living with her mother at 231 "A" North Kenwood Street in Glendale. After introducing me to her mother and further conversation we drove to the stables at Griffith Park and rented some horses. After riding the trails for about an hour we rode to the top of the mountain and sat down under a large tree to view the lights of Los Angeles, to spoon, and to plan the future. It seemed that we were already thinking of marriage, and we had met only that afternoon! We talked of traveling all over the world, to Europe and I even promised that some day I would take her to Rio de Janeiro. Well, I did take her to Europe and many parts of the world, but never to Rio de Janeiro, not that I couldn't have, but it did not later seem to be as choice a place to visit as it did at that particular moment in time. Anyway, we became so engrossed in our plans sitting there at the top of the mountain that time passed quickly, and by 10:30 P.M. the stables thought we had either gotten lost or rode off into the sunset with their horses. They sent out a wrangler to look for us.

Henrie Etta McWilliams was the daughter of William and Eleanor McWilliams. She was born in Craig, Colorado, where her dad owned a sheep ranch, and her mother taught school. Henrie Etta had attended Colorado Woman's College in Denver and had worked as a secretary in a bank at Grand Junction, Colorado. In 1938 the family sold the ranch and moved to California, largely due to a crisis in her dad's health. To me, she seemed the epitome of the blonde blue-eyed "maedel" I had earlier dreamed of marrying in Germany some day. However, she was not German. She was Scotch, Irish, English and Swedish, to trace her national ancestry. But no matter. We were now in America, in fact, we were now Californians, more to the point. Her Anglo-Saxon ancestry suited me just fine, as did just about everything else about her.

After that first hectic Saturday in August of 1946, our romance progressed rapidly, and we saw each other almost daily. The next weekend we took a trip to Lake Arrowhead, about 80 miles east of Glendale. This too resulted in an unusual encounter in which I again had problems hanging on to my money.

It was a Sunday and we started early, having breakfast out at a restaurant. While there I had to make a phone call, and left my wallet on the checkout counter of the restaurant. Somewhere about 50 miles down the road at San Bernardino I realized I had left my wallet at the previous restaurant. What to do? Turn back and spoil the day? No. We stopped at another restaurant and sweet-talked the owner (she was a lady) into loaning us $5.00 to carry us through the day. Reluctantly she complied, saying that if a nice couple like us let her down she would never trust anybody again in her lifetime. In the meantime we called Henrie's mother and had her pick up the wallet and went on to Lake Arrowhead. We had a marvelous day. Five dollars would go a long way in those days. We had many good times during our courtship. We went to Earl Can-oil's nightclub in Hollywood, we went to the Seven Seas. We went to the beach and we took an excursion one other Sunday to San Capistrano Mission about sixty miles to the south, this time in a foursome with some friends of mine from Montreal, Canada. They were a young married couple by the name of George and Dorothy Joel. We visited frequently with Jim and Marj Dodd. In fact, Marj couldn't be happier and fully approved of my choice. "Finally you're showing good sense", she told me. After a whirlwind courtship of about a month, we were picnicking in Griffith Park one fine Sunday afternoon when I asked her to marry me. She consented and we made plans. We set the date for November 22, 1946.

We were duly married at 7:30 P.M. at the picturesque little Wedding Chapel called the Wee Kirk o'the Heather on the beautiful grounds of Forest Lawn Memorial Park. This elegant little chapel is supposed to be an exact replica of the one built in honor of Annie Laurie back in Scotland. Henrie's father, William McWilliams had come back from Craig, Colorado, about a week earlier to attend the wedding. Hugh and Jackie McWilliams, Henrie's brother and sister-in-law came from San Jose, and Jackie was Henrie's maid of honor. Jim and Marj Dodd were there, and Jim stood up for me as best man. Henrie's Aunt Lenora and her grandmother were there. Altogether there was a nice group of about 30 people in attendance. Reverend E.E. Ellis, a Methodist Minister, performed the ceremony and when it was consummated a shower of orange petals floated down upon us from above. It was all very inspiring and we were off to an auspicious start.

A reception at her parent's apartment at 231 "A" N. Kenwood followed and lasted about an hour. Then we were off for our reservation at the beautiful and historic old Mission Inn at Riverside, California, about 60 miles away. When we arrived there after midnight, the clerk at the desk told us we had the honeymoon suite available to us, an unexpected surprise, although I suspect Henrie's mother had something to do with this.

We stayed there a few days. While there we met another newly married couple. He was a middle aged Irishman by the name of O'Brien and she was a Spanish gal by the name of Juanita, an interesting combination. They were friends of Jacqueline Cochran, the famous aviatrix and her wealthy business magnate husband, Floyd Bostwick Odium. The latter owned a lavish ranch in the Coachella Valley near Indio. The O'Briens had the use of the Odium's guest cottages and invited us to stay in one of them, since they were going to spend the next several days there. We took them up on the offer and stayed there for a day or two, enjoying the brisk clear air and desert scenery. A lot of pictures were taken and Juanita had this funny hang-up of saying "I see two eyes" every time she took a picture. From Indio we went to a motel in Palm Springs where we enjoyed lolling about the pool, soaking up the desert sunshine and sampling some of Palm Springs' better restaurants. From the desert we changed venue to the seashore and drove north and west up the coast to Santa Barbara, a beautiful city in those days, very much in the Spanish motif. We spent a few days there, much of the time on the beach.

We were driving back to Glendale after a ten-day honeymoon, returning late on a Sunday night when our troubles started. While driving down the long narrow road through Topanga Canyon, the drive shaft of my Olds '98 suddenly started banging on the floorboards like crazy. I stopped and checked it out, and found the drive shaft was utterly kaput. We managed to flag a passing motorist to send word to a lowing service to pick us up. (Fortunately, I belonged to the Triple A Auto Club at that time.) After about an hour a tow truck arrived. As the man was hitching our car to his towlines, a drunken driver came hurtling around the curve and slammed into the tow truck. The towing service now had to send word back for another service truck a real mess.

We finally got back to our apartment at about 3:00 A.M. Henrie's parents had charitably turned over their nice apartment to us and found themselves a lesser apartment in Glendale. Apartments in the post-war era were not easy to come by, and we were eternally grateful for their selfless and helpful gesture.

So it was now back to work. Henrie resumed her job at the bank. I had the problem of first getting the Olds fixed and then back to W. Bert Knight and company. At that time, I was becoming more aware of the tremendous potentialities of the real estate business. Prices were rapidly escalating, new subdivisions were popping up like spring flowers all over the landscape. Maybe I was in the middle of a bonanza and missing out on an unusual opportunity. I became more and more interested. I decided to take a course in real estate at a school exclusively devoted to that subject in downtown Los Angeles. It was a night course and lasted about six weeks. Furthermore, I had come to the conclusion that you could never get anywhere working for somebody else. If you were worth X number of dollars to your employer, you were worth five times that much to yourself, I reasoned.

Also, my relationship with Bert Knight was deteriorating, after we had had some philosophical exchanges at some of his parties, and in the presence of some of his guests. I began to wonder if despite his staunchly Anglo-Saxon name whether Bert Knight was really a Jew incognito. One day I broached the subject with Al Rissi, one of the two other salesmen I mentioned earlier. He said, could be, he didn't know, a defensive nolo contendere. Obviously, he did not want to get involved. Anyway, word got back to Bert that I had raised the question, and he was not pleased. I stayed on another month, to the end of March 1947, and then we parted company. I never did find out for certain whether he was or was not a Jew, but his physiognomy indicated to me that he was, and so did his mannerism. Anyway, I said to hell with him.

Shortly thereafter I had completed my real estate course and taken the California real estate exams to obtain my R.E. Broker's license. (At that time you could go for the Broker's license without first having to be a salesman. Although the exams were harder, I opted for the Broker's license.) I scouted the territory for a suitable company and finally made a meaningful contact with a partnership called Augustine and Pierce, whose office was located in Beverly Hills. Mr. Augustine, the younger of the two, assured me I had entered into the right field of endeavor when I decided to go into real estate, that opportunity was unlimited, and that I would make more money in real estate than I had ever dreamed of. I was eagerly motivated to test his claim, but nevertheless, took it all with a grain of salt.

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Milestone Twenty-Two: Up in the Mountains of Big Bear

About a month before I left Bert Knight, I had traded in my big gas-guzzling Olds '98 and bought a snazzy, brand new Studebaker Coupe. It was off-white in color and a classic one-of-a-kind, very streamlined, and looking at it from the side it was hard to tell which end was which, or whether it was coming or going. It cost a bundle, about $1600, which was a lot of money in those days. Since I had paid cash, I had practically wiped out all of our savings for this little indulgence.

The job Augustine & Pierce offered me was selling lots at a subdivision that they had newly acquired at Big Bear, a mountain resort area located about 110 miles east and north of Glendale. Actually, it was an old pre-war subdivision, complete with a good well and a broken down set of water lines that leaked like a sieve. They added a pump, a diesel motor and a large 1000 gallon water storage tank to the water system, bulldozed the streets a little, and they were ready to go. They did not really own all the lots. What they had done was buy up what tax lots they could, and what unsold lots were left from the previous subdivision owners. The lots were small, 30' x 80', but the ground was level, and the view was good. Also on the premises was a new two-story pine cabin, built under the auspices of Augustine & Pierce to serve as a sales office and residence for the sales manager, who ever he or she might be. The cabin had been built out of green lumber, and when we moved in we found the boards had shrunk drastically, leaving large cracks for the wind to howl through in incumbent weather. In short, the walls were as incapable of holding back the wind as the water lines were of containing the water.

But none of this particularly bothered us. We were young and full of new adventure and we eagerly took the job. Soon after we arrived there in the first part of May, a snowstorm blew up (the elevation here was about 6000 feet) and we found snow blowing profusely through the cracks in our upstairs bedroom the first night we were there. But no problem. We hung up some blankets against the windward side of the wall, and anyway, it was only temporary. The weather soon turned pleasant.

The project turned out to be no financial bonanza. I was to get a 10% commission on the lots I sold. The lots averaged about $300 each, with the "frontage" lots going for $500. So my commission at best would be somewhere between $30 and $50 a lot, if and when they were paid for. Since the property was at the extreme eastern end of the road, prospects coming by to look at the property were few and far between. As a result we had a lean, lean summer as our first venture into real estate. Mr. Augustine's predictions about great financial rewards seemed extremely remote at this juncture.

However, not only did we have ample time and opportunity to explore and travel the area, but we had fun. Early in the season I bought two lots for ourselves and we started building a mountain cabin of our own. We used native stone for the foundation and the fireplace, a commodity of which there was an unlimited abundance. The outer siding consisted of slabs we obtained for next to nothing from a nearby sawmill boards of varying width anywhere from 4 to 14 inches, with the bark still on one side of the board. It turned out to be a real attractive rustic cabin. One weekend Jim Dodd and a friend came up and helped put the framing together and set it up. (This was in repayment for all the hours I had spent working on his house in La Crescenta.) Unfortunately, by the time the summer was over, we did not quite get it finished, but we did get it closed in. Anyway, we had a lot of fun building it, and it was a novel experience.

One other job I had on the subdivision was keeping up the water pressure in the system. As I said previously, it was an old subdivision that had the water lines installed some 20 years earlier and the system leaked like a sieve. By morning the pressure would invariably be down to zero. So every morning I would go down to the pump house, start up the diesel and pump up the large pressure tank. One morning as I did so we had left the faucets open at the kitchen sink (no pressure). Henrie happened to be out of the house while I was pumping up the system. When we came back the water was rushing out over the kitchen sink, out of the kitchen and running out through the front door of the living room.

Another time we had gone to a movie for the evening and the water pressure was down. The water in the hot water tank, which was heated by propane, had evidently sunk to a minimum level and evidently caused the thermostat to fall. Anyway, it had heated up like a steam boiler and when we flushed the toilet a cloud of steam came gushing up. When we opened the faucets in the kitchen sink nothing but hot steam came rushing out. It's a wonder the house didn't blow up.

About a mile south of us there was a big dog ranch. One day we were visited by a very large dog. I don't know what breed he was, but he was neither a Great Dane nor a St. Bernard, but he looked like he might have been a cross between the two. Whatever his breed, if he had one, he was as big as a horse, but very friendly. He liked us and we liked him, and he stayed with us for a month. I would take him around in my little Studebaker and when he sat in the passenger side of the front seat he looked as big as a person, and twice as impressive.

One day towards the end of summer, a real estate tycoon by the name of M. Penn Phillips from Azusa drove up to look over our layout. We entered into a friendly conversation and he suggested when I came back down from the hill I should look him up. He was sure he could fit me into his sales staff. He gave me his card.

It had been a lazy, lackadaisical summer, almost like a vacation at a mountain resort. I sold about 25 or 30 lots, hardly enough to pay for our groceries. By the end of the summer we were flat broke.

During the last week in September I decided to go "down the hill" and look up Penn Phillips about the job he said he had waiting for me. By this time fall was coming on up in the mountains and the days were getting colder. We had an oil-fueled heater in the middle of the living room that took care of the whole cabin. The heater, too, was somewhat erratic and unreliable. Sometimes more oil would gather at the bottom of the unit than was safe. The day I was getting ready to go down and see Penn Phillips and getting all spruced up in my best suit and tie, I lit the heater.

Somehow the damn thing flared up into a minor explosion, and blew soot all over the building, even into the upstairs. I had an appointment to keep, and making the best of a bad situation, I washed up, showered, dressed up and took off for Azusa, leaving Henrie with the sooty mess to clean up. I met with Penn Phillips in Azusa, and he steered me to W. W. "Bill" Beacom, who had a real estate office on east Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena. Penn Phillips at this stage was 66, was a very wealthy little man, and had been in the subdivision business for 40 years. He specialized in the $10 down, $10 a month type of operations, and had started any number of subdivisions from Coos Bay, Oregon to San Diego to Riverside. In fact, at one time he bragged that his outfit had sold more lots than any other in the country. Bill Beacom was just starting up in the real estate business and his prime efforts were directed at selling the properties set up by Penn Phillips. I went to see Beacom and he hired me on the spot.

I went back "up the hill" to Big Bear. We closed in our log cabin that we had labored on all summer. (Although it was not finished inside, I sold it about a year later for about $1500). We loaded all our belongings into our little Studebaker and left for the bright lights again. We rented a duplex apartment, one of Beacom's projects, in Azusa, and I started my new job in Beacom's United Realty office during the first week of October.

Things went much better. Beacom had a motley crew of six salesmen, some of which were just now getting their salesman's license. Anyway, by the second month I was the top salesman in the office. Nevertheless, when we landed in Azusa, I had to take out an $800 loan from the bank against my Studebaker to help pay for rent, groceries and some furniture we had to buy. In a few months I had the loan paid off and we were even putting a few dollars in the bank.

After seven or eight months I had saved up about $1500 and had a backlog of about $5000 coming in commissions. (Most of our commissions were paid on the installment plan as the payments came in on the lots sold.) I thought the time had come to make good on my theory that I was worth more working for myself than for someone else. This I soon managed to do. I was 30 at the time, and if we ignore being a slave to the Jewish I.R.S., never again was I ever in the employ of another man, or another company.

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Milestone Twenty-Two: Up in the Mountains of Big Bear

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Against the Evil Tide - 24

Milestone Twenty-Three: I Go Into Business for Myself

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Working in the same office with me at Bill Beacom's was a fellow by the name of Ben Burke. He was a fast-talking Irishman about ten years older than I and claimed he had been in the real estate business (off and on) for 13 years. He and I decided to go into partnership. We took over a small office at the corner of Huntington Drive and Alhambra Road, an office formerly run by his father-in-law. We agreed to pay his father-in-law $1200.00 for the privilege, with me putting up my half in cash. Since Burke was stone-broke, he just gave his father-in-law a note for the other $600.00, a note that I am sure was never paid or intended to be paid. Exactly what we were paying the old man for still remains a mystery, since there was nothing of much value he had to convey, except perhaps that elusive commodity called "good will". Even this was extremely doubtful. One day I answered the phone and someone on the other end wanted to place a bet on the horses. When I told him he had the wrong number, he insisted he did not, that I was kidding him. I later found out that the old man had done very little real estate business, but had. In fact, spent most of his time playing the horses and run a sort of amateur bookie joint.

We were now into the summer of 1948, trying to get listings and sell properties. Business was slow. I made another unpleasant discovery. My partner had some glaring weaknesses. He, too, liked to play the horses. But that was not all. Every so often he would go on a drunken binge and stay away from the office. A few such episodes and I had had enough. I offered to "buy him out", which consisted of paying him the other $600.00 he supposedly owed his father-in-law.

After I had the office to myself, business began to pick up. Penn Phillips offered me an exclusive on one of his subdivisions in Antelope Valley. We made a deal and I soon had about four or five salesmen working for me. After another six months, I abandoned the small office on Huntington Drive and rented a larger office at 5612 East Beverly Blvd., in East Los Angeles.

Among the salesmen I hired were Gene Vogt, Ray Belt, Louis T. Bethan, to name a few. Another man I hired was a renegade ex-preacher by the name of M. Stanley Peek. He was from Arkansas and was a member of the Church of Christ. I had known him when we both worked as salesmen for W. W. Beacom. After I left Beacom he went into partnership with another real estate salesman by the name of Don Trout and the two of them had worked a land deal in Nevada. The deal had failed and Peek came to work for me. However, he was bullish about the possibilities of acquiring some large tracts in Nevada for subdivision and after a while I was interested enough to look into it.

Trout and Peek had worked a large acreage deal whereby they sold the acreage in 160 acre tracts at $10.00 down, $10.00 a month, and $10.00 an acre. One of their problems was that neither one of them had any money of their own to speak of, nor did they own the land they were selling. Half the proceeds went to owners of the land for whom they were acting as agents. On top of this, their somewhat irresponsible advertising promised more than they could deliver. As I mentioned earlier, the venture failed, partly due to bad management, and partly due to the inherently sleazy nature of the two characters running it.

Merle Stanley Peek was one of those colorful but cantankerous characters of whom you would not want to meet more than once In a lifetime. He could lie as only an ex-preacher can, and had the unusual ability to appear arrogant and sanctimonious at the same time. He had a tremendous ego whose past accomplishments did not by any means justify the overweening opinion he had of himself, nor did it support his braggart rendition of his past. At 44 he was broke, he was a drifter and was married to a mestizo Mexican woman by the name of Esther. They had three young boys, ages seven years and younger. He had been married before, and had a shiftless, irresponsible son from the previous marriage who was also married and alternated living with his mother, and when Stan was able, sponging off his dad. Somehow, Stan Peek was always in the middle of a hassle, and I should have known better than to have had anything to do with him. But I did not. When he came to work for me in 1949, he managed to suppress most of his nastier characteristics, and I was somewhat intrigued about the Nevada land possibilities, which as I saw it, if managed differently could be built into a major venture. One of the prerequisites that I insisted on if we did go into such a venture was that we would not act as agents for some third party, but would own our land outright and have complete control of our business.

Meanwhile, my real estate business at 5612 E. Beverly Blvd. was going well. I specialized in acreage and lots and had subdivision deals going at Fontana, Riverside and Antelope Valley. I now had a staff of five or six salesmen. Whereas I was not getting rich, I was putting some money in the bank. I had traded off my snappy little Studebaker and bought a new 1949 blue Hudson sedan, which could accommodate more passengers, a necessity in showing properties. My wife and I now rented a nice apartment in South Pasadena at 1100 Maple Street. While Peek was still my salesman, we decided to take a tour of the State of Nevada and look for some promising properties to buy. We made an extensive tour of the state and ended up in the office of Wayne McLeod, whose official position was that of Surveyor General of the State of Nevada, and also its Lieutenant Governor. His office was in the State Capitol in Carson City. As a sideline, Wayne McLeod was also a real estate broker. This combination gave him a considerable advantage and a fairly wide knowledge of real estate in Nevada.

He had a property listed that sounded interesting. It consisted of 18,200 acres lying in a valley west of Lake Lahonton. This property was part of the famous Break-a-Heart Ranch, owned by a flamboyant playboy by the name of Richard Conklin.

Richard had married a young heiress several years previously and when she died young, he had given his ranch the tragic and romantic name mentioned above. As well as the 18,200 sagebrush acres he had listed for sale, his ranch consisted of some fertile alfalfa land along the Carson River, and a beautiful ranch dwelling. It was, in all aspects, a gentleman rancher's dream. The property for sale sounded interesting. Not only was it mostly level, but it was intersected and accessible by two major highways, namely U.S. 50 and U.S. 95 Alternate. The fact that it bordered a large sized lake (although it had no direct lake frontage) was so much icing on the cake. On further negotiation we found that it could be purchased at $2.00 an acre, in other words, $36,400.00, with $1,800.00 down and installments of $1,800.00, including 6% interest, every six months. The property lay 35 miles east of Carson City and 26 miles west of Fallen, Nevada. However, the section at the direct intersection of Highways 50 and 95 was owned by another party and was not part of the deal. One added plus, however, was that the land had been surveyed by the U.S. Geodetic Survey and the brass plate section markers were in at every corner.

The deal looked good and we decided to form a partnership, Klassen and Peek, and buy the land. I had about $6,000.00 saved up at this time, had a going office, and had an income. Like Ben Burke before him, Peek was flat broke. He managed to borrow the necessary $1,000.00 down payment from his wife's Mexican parents and I put up the other $1,000.00 and the deal was consummated.

So now I was running two businesses out of my office. The former land business with my other salesmen continued as before, and now the Nevada partnership with Peek, in which the other salesmen had no part.

The Nevada venture consumed more and more of my time, not only in the office, but also the increasingly frequent trips we would have to take to Fallen for various reasons. Fallen was 500 miles away, a trip that usually required more than a day to accomplish just one-way. Therefore, what with time consumed at the property, the trip up and back, usually a whole week was consumed. Also another problem developed in the office. The other non-participating salesmen resented the fact that Peek, who had been one of them, now had a special deal and they were being neglected. The time had come to decide on Nevada or to run the local business. I saw where the Nevada deal could be built into a business that could be the basis for a major operation for decades. To run it properly, I felt that one of us should be on the site in Nevada and properly take care of that end of it, while the other should run the office In the Los Angeles area and send up the prospects.

We decided to call our venture The Silver Springs Land Co.

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Milestone Twenty-Three: I Go Into Business for Myself

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Against the Evil Tide - 25

Milestone Twenty-Four: Fallon, Nevada, and into the Wild West

On October of 1950 we made our decision. Henrie and I would move to Fallen, Nevada, and the Pecks would stay in Alhambra and run the office there. In short order we sold the few pieces of furniture we owned in the South Pasadena apartment, and loaded the rest of our belongings into our navy blue Hudson sedan. I can't help but be amazed how few our belongings were then compared to the large moving vans we have had to utilize in all our subsequent moves. Anyway, with our Hudson loaded to the gills, off we went to a new venture and a new environment a farming and ranching area that still had much of the old Wild West inherent in its atmosphere. I looked forward to the change as a new adventure. After all, I had always had a hankering for the Old West, what with its ghost towns, ranching and wide-open spaces. Fallen, Nevada, not only represented plenty of ranching and farming, but only about 25 miles to the west of Silver Springs was the storied old mining town of Virginia City, which, although no longer rich in ore, it was rich in lore and storied romance.

We had previously befriended a young couple in Fallen by the names of Bill and Adah Petherbridge, and had asked them to find us an apartment to rent. Since my wife was pregnant at the time, she told them to make sure it was a ground floor apartment. The Petherbridge couple were about our age, in their middle thirties. They were a congenial couple and we soon became close friends. Bill was head of the Fallen and Churchill County Chamber of Commerce and had many contacts. Both Bill and Adah had been married before. He had a 13-year-old son, and now they had a young daughter of their own, only about two years of age. Bill sometimes had his moody side, and also sometimes indulged in too much to drink. He had had a father who had gone insane. At times this preyed on his mind and he brooded that perhaps he, too, might end up as did his father. Although a most friendly and outgoing couple, they had more than their share of marital spats, some of which we had to witness.

Having initially headquartered in Fallen, I set about expanding our Silver Springs Land Co. venture. Although when in 1949 we bought the 18,200 acres in the valley around the crossroads of U.S. Highways 50 and 95 Alternate, we did not at that time acquire the particular section at the intersection Itself. This was owned by a young fellow and his mother who lived in nearby Wabuska, about 15 miles to the south. Their names were Glenn D. Hurt and Katherine Hurt respectively. On June 6, 1950 we managed to negotiate the purchase of this strategic piece of property for the sum of approximately $10.00 an acre. Since there had been some acreage taken out for highway right-of-way (for both 50 and 95 Alt.) and also a piece of acreage for the existing airstrip utilized by the Naval Air Force during the war, our total price came to about $6000.00.

Once we had acquired this property, it was urgent that we build a headquarters and an office at the crossroads and put our sign "Silver Springs Land Co." in large letters at the ridge of the roof. This we did in short order. Stan Peek's brother, Dan, who was a contractor, came all the way from Silver Spring, Maryland, to do the job in the fall of 1950. We now had a nice concrete block building that consisted of an office occupying the front one third of the building, and a large room and a small bathroom, occupying the back two-thirds.

I set about subdividing and laying out the town site of Silver Springs. To do this job, I hired a surveyor from Virginia City. His name was Walter G. Reid and he was also a senator in the Nevada legislature. I laid out the street plan, the size of the blocks and the size of the lots, and named every one of the dozens of streets in the five hundred and some acre subdivision. We had a well drilled in the middle of the subdivision and put in a pump and pressure tank in a pump house. We then ran water lines to each individual lot throughout the subdivision at considerable expense.

We also laid out 320 acre, or 640 acre, subdivisions of five-acre lots on various sections away from the crossroads itself. These did not have a water system but required the owners to drill their own well. We did, however, have these surveyed and staked, the lots numbered and a graded road to each. We started selling these for $249.00, $10.00 down and $10.00 per month. We soon discovered that these offerings of 5 acres proved much more popular than the smaller city lots with water lines. Soon we were doing a land office business. Our prices soon went up to $295.00 per five acres, then to $345.00 then $395.00 and before long they were selling for $895.00. We were in business. By the middle of 1951 we were taking in as much as $10,000.00 a month. We acquired more large acreages in this same Lahontan valley. On January 31, 1951, I negotiated the purchase of approximately 6000 acres from an enterprising young rancher by the name of John J. Casey and his wife Myrtle E. Casey. Whereas we had paid only $2.00 an acre a little more than a year earlier when we made our first purchase from Richard H. Conklin, we now paid more than three times as much for similar adjoining acres in our purchase from Casey. Our activities in the area had driven up the price, which while favorable when selling, worked against us in buying. Nevertheless, we were now in a position to buy, and sales looked promising. We also bought up several smaller pieces in short order to round out our possessions. We bought 640 acres from M.P. Glessner and his wife Patsy, who resided at nearby Femley. We bought some scattered pieces from the County itself, namely Lyon County, that they had acquired through tax foreclosures.

Since much of the land in the west was checker-boarded due to the fact the railroads in the nineteenth century acquired vast areas of patented government land in an every other section pattern, there remained a number of sections that were still owned by the government, the Bureau of Land Management. One of the most important negotiations we were able to accomplish at this time was to trade some of the interspersed government sections that were in the valley for some of our outlying sections that were on the slope of the hills and mountains. This accrued much to our benefit in two ways: it made our holdings more contiguous, and secondly, we usually acquired a better piece of valley land.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, back in Saskatchewan, I still had two brothers and one sister, all of which were married and had families, and lived on farms. My youngest brother Korni (Kornelius) who was ten years older than I, had written me on a few occasions of how miserably cold it got during the Saskatchewan winters (a situation of which I was well aware) and how he hated living where he did. He wrote about a particularly poignant incident where he and his wife Martha were coming home from somewhere one dark night and they got caught in a blizzard. Evidently, they got lost and ran into a snow filled ravine. The horses and sled got bogged down in the deep snow and they set off on foot to find the nearest dwelling, not knowing north from south. They finally ended up crawling on their hands and knees with the two little ones tied to their backs. They finally saw a light and stumbled into a neighbor's house, on the verge of being frozen to death.

When he related this tragic story to me by letter, I wrote him and suggested if he disliked Saskatchewan that much why didn't he move to some warmer clime. When I said that, I was not at all inviting them to come to Nevada, but merely making a detached and obvious observation. One day in February of 1951 as I came home for lunch to our apartment in Fallon, my wife acted a little strange as we engaged in conversation. All of a sudden, surprise! surprise! The surprise was on me! Through the door from the next room, with much fanfare, emerged my brother Korni, his wife Martha, and their brood of four boys, aged from two to eleven. So there they were, having taken my suggestion seriously. Here we are, we have no plans, now what can you do for us? Surprise! Surprise!

We moved them into the rear room of the Silver Springs office building. A little later, we provided them with a choice 320-acre piece fronting on U.S. 95 Alt., about three miles south of the intersection. We had a well drilled for them at our expense. He bought a small house for $1500.00 and had it moved onto the 320 acres. He had some vague ideas about farming the land by irrigation. I "loaned" him $5000.00 to purchase a set of aluminum irrigation pipes. I never saw the $5000.00 again.

On June 7, 1951 our one and only daughter (and child) Kim Anita was born in the hospital at Fallen. It so happened that my wife's birthday also fell on June 7. The birth of our daughter put a new perspective on our lifestyle, as to where we lived, and how we lived. Our business was prospering but we lived in a not so great apartment (there were no new apartments) and the town of Fallen itself was not the most auspicious or desirable place in the world in which to reside and bring up a family. Whereas the winters were tolerable, the springs and falls were most pleasant, the summers were intolerably hot, with dust storms whipping up a scenario every now and then, not an uncommon phenomenon out in the desert. (Whereas that area, as most of Nevada, is desert, there were about 50,000 acres of green, irrigated farms in the Fallen Irrigation District deriving their water from Lake Lahontan, a lake which bordered much of our property at Silver Springs.) In any case, after the birth of our daughter, my wife was unhappy about living in Fallen, or building a house at Silver Springs, or for that matter living anywhere in Nevada, and she was becoming unhappier by the day. The time had come to make an agonizing re-appraisal.

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Besides the two major highways that cut through our property, and besides the adjoining Lake Lahontan, there was a railway that ran up from Yerington and on north between the lake and U.S. 95A. A slow freight train ran through there, perhaps once a day, if at all. One Sunday, a few weeks after the birth of our daughter, I started out to show some of our five-acre properties to a nice couple from San Francisco. They and their two boys got into my Hudson and the five of us drove along a graded dirt road that crossed the railroad tracks to a five-acre subdivision near the lake. We were heavily engrossed in conversation as I slowly started to cross the railroad tracks. In fact, I was driving so slowly the car happened to stall at exactly the middle of the tracks. I had had some problem with the ignition key making connections the last few days, a matter I intended to get fixed, but had not. I tried to re-start the engine, but the ignition switch made no contact. Just then I heard the shrill whistle of an oncoming locomotive to my right, and to my horror I realized the freight train was bearing down upon us. I tried again to start the engine. No luck. By this time the whistle was screaming and I could see the engineer in the side window of the cab frantically waving his arms for us to get the hell out of the car. I got the message. I told the man and wife, who were in the front seat with me, to get out quick, and then yanked the two small boys in the back seat out. Only about two seconds later the locomotive hit my Hudson amidships, and I'll never forget the sound of that crash. Caught up on the cowcatcher, I can still hear the "rat-a-tat-tat" as the car bounced along over the crossties for the next several hundred yards before the train could finally come to a stop. It had a long line of heavy ore-filled cars behind the engine.

After the train came to a halt, the crew pushed the battered Hudson off the tracks. I got into the cab of the locomotive and they took me another mile or so, to where it stopped again opposite our land office. I walked the intervening distance to the office and got into one of the Peek brothers' cars and picked up our prospective customers, whom I had left at the scene of the accident. Either through sheer gratitude that they were all still alive, or through sympathy for the misfortune I had suffered, they went ahead and bought a five acre piece anyway, a property they did not get to see, at least not that day.

* * * * *

There was never a dull moment during the year we spent in Nevada. One day during the spring of 1951, I was peacefully sitting at my desk in the front office when a car drove up. Out jumped a band of five or so Indians from one of the nearby reservations and barged into my office. One Redskin was carrying a nice shiny rifle. Shades of the Old Wild West! They did not seem like friendly Injuns. "You wanna buy a rifle? Cheap! Only five dollars!" I declined and nervously made some friendly conversation, hoping they would not use the business end of the rifle to consummate the deal, or to collect the five dollars and whatever else I might have in my wallet. After a few minutes of "no deal!" they left, much to my relief. About ten minutes later, a squad car with a sheriff and two deputies swerved into the drive. They asked had I seen a band of Indians with a rifle? I sure had. Which way did they go? They went thataway, pardner, north, up the road towards Femicy. Off they went in hot pursuit, and soon caught the Redskins. As I had correctly suspected, the rifle had been stolen.

My college roommate, Jim Dodd, who had come to California with me, was settled with his wife Marge, in the western part of Los Angeles. He was quite an aggressive eager beaver and had done quite well in various enterprises in which he had engaged. At present, 1951, he had a small manufacturing plant that made electric induction coils on specialty orders, that were used in airplanes, electronic gear and other military equipment. Since the Korean war was now in full swing he could pretty well name his own price, and he was making a killing. He watched our Silver Springs project with keen interest, and some avarice, and having extra money to invest he let us know that he would like part of the action.

At this time, we were expanding rapidly and committing ourselves to buying more land. Although business was good, and we had an increasing number of $10.00 a month payments coming in, we also had a lot of expenses (streets, surveying, water systems) and some fairly heavy mortgage payments to meet. We could use some extra cash, over and above our cash flow. So we made a deal. We wanted more buildings to appear on the scene in our subdivision. If he would build two major CBS buildings (for himself) at or near the intersection, plus a certain sum in cash to us, we would deed some good and valuable pieces of property over to him.

The deal was made, and Dan Peek, Stan's brother, was the contractor. He built a factory building on Highway 50, about half a mile west of the crossroads, and when it was finished he had three or four employees actually working in there winding induction coils. The other structure he built was a large warehouse type of building, walls 12 feet high, and approximately 50 x 100 feet in dimensions. However, after he had the walls up, he was stalled for a while waiting for steel beams for the roof and other details. This left the long walls exposed and unsupported. Meanwhile, one of those almost hurricane force windstorms that are characteristic of the desert, came along and broke down all four walls, leaving only the jagged four corners standing. So it stood for a while, an eyesore to say the least, certainly no advertising asset to our project. He finally finished repairing and restructuring the building after I had divested myself of the operation. I never did see the finished building.

After the loss of my revered navy blue Hudson on the railroad tracks, I bought a big black used Cadillac. We had already come to an agreement with Stan and Esther Peek that we had completed our tour of duty, and that in exchange they would now man the station at Silver Springs. We in turn would reside in California, open an office, advertise and send prospects up to Silver Springs. I would come up to the property on weekends to help out, when needed, a process that we had carried out before, with our positions now reversed. My wife and I and our little daughter got into our newly purchased black Cadillac and set out for the San Francisco Bay area to do some serious house hunting.

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Milestone Twenty-Five: To the San Francisco Bay Area

After having spent a year in the wide-open spaces of Nevada, we chose to move to the so-called Bay Area of California, rather than go back to the Los Angeles area. The reasons we chose this locale were several. For one thing, the climate was cooler than in Southern California. Secondly, the area was closer to our Nevada property, approximately half the distance, and a majority of our prospects came from this population center. Thirdly, a spirit of exploring a new territory also had something to do with the choice.

In any case, towards the end of October of 1951 we hired a moving van and transported our increasing assortment of belongings to move into the new home we had purchased in the village of San Lorenzo a few weeks previously. Although not large, it was a beautiful house, two bedrooms plus small den, the first home we had ever owned. It had been a model home for the developer who had built it as a combination sales office and show model for the tract that he was merchandizing. It came complete with model furniture, carpeting, walls decorated in attractive wallpaper and colors, everything ready to move into. We paid $12,500 for the home, an extra premium, but felt it was worth every penny.

My role regarding the land sales in Nevada was now reversed. Peek and family were now on the property, and I was advertising and sending prospects to the property. I soon rented a small office in Oakland, which became my operating headquarters.

Not only did I try to contact prospects, but nearly every week-end I would drive to Silver Springs to help show property. I would usually leave San Lorenzo at approximately four o'clock on Saturday morning - drive the 260 miles over U.S. 50 in approximately five to five and a half hours and arrive at the property at about nine o'clock, or shortly thereafter. I would sleep overnight on a couch in the front office of our headquarters building, while the five Peeks lived and slept in the large room in back of it, all of us sharing a small bathroom. Then, if things went well, I would leave at about five o'clock on Sunday afternoon, arriving back home at San Lorenzo sometime between 10:00 and 11 P.M. However, many a time there were numerous delays and I might get back at three o'clock in the morning. More often than not there were emergencies, extra problems that required my attention, and I would have to stay over a few extra days.

One Sunday night I was barreling down the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas on U.S. 50, just west of Placerville. It was about 12 o'clock midnight when I noticed a car about a quarter of a mile ahead of me was slowing down to a stop, but staying in the two-lane road. As I was getting ready to pass it on the left I saw a deer standing there in the headlights about 50 feet ahead of us. Too late, I slammed on the brakes, only to swerve my car sideways and catch the other car's rear bumper with my rear fender. Why the fellow hadn't driven his car off the shoulder, I will never know but when I talked to him I noticed the smell of alcohol on his breath. In no time at all, it seemed, a woman patrol officer appeared on the scene and took notes of the whole affair. Luckily, my car was not so badly damaged that I could not continue the rest of the trip home.

In the meantime, sales were going fairly well and business was prospering. We were doing especially well in the sales of five-acre tracts, which in fact, by this time were our mainstay. Other than the fact that business was good, all other aspects of the partnership were becoming increasingly intolerable. Dan Peek, Stan's brother, had moved with his family of five from Maryland to Silver Springs and now lived on the property. His main preoccupation was building Stan Peek's new house, a dwelling that was located on 160 acres about a mile south of the cross roads. There was increasing rancor between Stan Peek and his brother. There was a bitter feud between the Peeks and my brother Korni. Stan Peek, at the age of 45, for the first time in his life had a small measure of financial success (still in the small leagues, but that did not dampen his arrogance) and his inherently pathological nastiness began to surface more openly. He became more overbearing and high and mighty, trying to over-compensate for his previous failures as a drifter and a loser. In fact, all those obnoxious and unsavory characteristics one would expect from a lying renegade Arkansas preacher that I had suspected he had to begin with, now came to the fore and were further exacerbated.

I now began to take stock of the situation. Although I did not go to Silver Springs every weekend, my repeated trips up there and back were beginning to become an unpleasant bore, made more unpleasant by all the wrangling that I was continually drawn into as an unwilling participant. My half interest in the project now was worth somewhere in the neighborhood of $200,000. Peek and I were now discussing the prospect of one party buying out the other. He was willing to go either way, and for a while, so was I. However, either way it would have to be done on an installment basis, over a period of perhaps five years. Being aware of the shifty nature of my partner, I was not too keen about depending on him to make his payments in the coming years.

I began to consider the several alternatives. My wife and I were established in a beautiful home in the peaceful, attractive area of San Lorenzo, adjoining the larger city of Hayward, an area which back in 1951 had much to offer. The climate was pleasant, in contrast to the hot desert summers and cold winters of the Nevada landscape, not to mention the sandstorms. My wife much preferred living where we were to going back to Silver Springs. And then there was the matter of our new daughter. Certainly she would have a much more pleasant up bringing and environment here than in the Nevada milieu. In one way, I had a certain vested attachment to the Silver Springs development, into which I had poured much energy and imagination, and I had a desire to really make something big and meaningful out of the project. On the other hand, it would be a decided relief to be rid of all the hassles, pressures and commitments that went with the territory. Still, I did not want to sell to Peek and probably have to hassle with him in the future to make his committed payments, or even to have to listen to his damn ongoing hassles with everybody.

A solution presented itself. A lumber dealer from Redwood City, across the bay from where we lived, was interested in buying my half interest. Whereas Peek was willing to pay me $200,000 (on the installment basis) Phillip Hess was only willing to pay $150,000, also on the installment basis. I agonized over the matter for some time. Should I buy out Peek? Should I sell to Peek? Should I sell to Hess for a lower price instead?

Finally, in November of 1952 I made up my mind. I would sell to Hess for $150,000, wash my hands of the whole affair, and live the life of a retired gentleman. The more I thought about it, the more the idea appealed to me. A contract was drawn up and the sale was consummated. A few years later, Hess sold out to Peek, and made a $50,000 profit, I understand, but I couldn't care less. The point is that not only did he make his payments on time, but Hess paid up the end balance a year ahead of when it was due.

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Milestone Twenty-Five: To the San Francisco Bay Area

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Milestone Twenty-Six: Glenmore Gardens and Canolectric

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While $150,000 may not seem like a great deal of money today, we must remember that 35 or 40 years ago it was probably the equivalent of a million dollars today. Anyway, I felt that we could comfortably live on our nest egg for the next 20 years, if not longer, what with accruing interest and all. As my interests shifted away from Silver Springs, and I now had the independence of time and some money to play with, I naturally became interested in other investments.

One of my first (but no means last!) business boondoggles that I got involved in was a new company in San Mateo that proposed to put a self-lighting cigarette on the market. The name of the company was Commercial Tobacco Corp. It was headed by a little Greek barber by the name of Frank Witt. The idea intrigued me, as evidently it did a lot of other people. Even the business press seemed favorably impressed and was helpful in putting out some glowing reports of its future prospects. (In fact, that is how I first heard about it.) Initially, I bought a few hundred shares at $1.00 a share.

Next, I traded in the black Cadillac sedan I had bought second hand a year earlier (after my Hudson was demolished on the railroad tracks at Silver Springs) and bought a brand new powder blue Cadillac Coupe de Ville.

This cost a neat $5000, a fairly decent sum in those days, but what the hell, I always did want a new Cadillac, and I was entitled to one, I convinced myself.

Also, we felt that we needed a bigger house, especially one that had a larger den or recreation room. There was an interesting new subdivision being started in the cow pastures near the little town of Centerville, about ten miles south of where we lived. Again, going back about 35 years ago, the area on the east side of San Francisco Bay between Hayward and San Jose at that time consisted mostly of farming land, orchards, and cow pastures with five little towns scattered on either side of Highway 17. These towns were (in order going south) Union City, Centerville, Irvington, Newark and Milpitas. Even before we left the area in 1958, this conglomerate was incorporated into a new city called Fremont, and represents a major population center today.

But getting back to 1952, we selected a lot in Glenmore Gardens and had a home built to our specifications, which included a large recreation room or den. The plans also called for two flagstone fireplaces, one in the living room, the other in the den, back to back. We negotiated the deal, lot and all, for $17,500.00, again, a fairly tidy amount in those days. Our address was 439 Morris Road. (My daughter, who revisited the place in 1987, tells me the street numbering system has been changed since then.)

We put our home in San Lorenzo up for sale and soon found a buyer willing to pay us $15,000 for it. Our new place in Glenmore Gardens was to be ready by Feb. 1, 1953, and we retained an option to stay in the San Lorenzo home until that date, although the closing date was earlier. The new house was not ready on time, and reluctantly we moved out on Feb. 1, took a motel room in San Jose and put our furniture and belongings into storage. Finally towards the end of May 1953, our new home was ready and we moved in, much to our relief.

I was now a gentleman retired, and with no visible business activities. I had time on my hands. There was, of course, a considerable amount of work entailed in fixing up the yard, putting in the lawn, the planters, the shrubbery. I joined a Country Club in Oakland, or Piedmont, and played golf. However, I found that didn't interest me too much, and I don't believe I played more than half a dozen games before dropping my membership. However, I did play a lot of tennis, and Glenmore Gardens had a set of courts in a park only a few blocks from our new home.

My interests turned to woodworking as a hobby. In order to do this properly I had to have a workshop, of course, so I built one in the back yard. This soon became a major project, and not only did I build a gorgeous workshop paneled in knotty pine, with a shake shingle roof and a large plate glass window, but I also built a lanai between the workshop and the house, complete with an outdoor fireplace and a barbecue. The latter were built of used brick, as was a central planter.

Soon I had the workshop stocked with an assortment of electrical tools - a bench saw, a drill press, a shaper, a woodworking lathe, a band saw, and a collection of hand tools, electric and otherwise. So now I had to make something, do something, with all that equipment. The next thing I did was build a playhouse for my then four year old daughter. It was constructed out of redwood and it, too, had a shake shingle roof. What next? My interest in the self-lighting cigarette increased as time went by, and so did the amount of my investment. Soon I had $4,000 sunk into this gamble. Not too long after that the venture went flat broke. The company did reach the point where it had actually manufactured some crude cigarettes with a sulphur tip that lit like a match when struck on a prepared surface on the side of the pack. But by that time the business was out of money and out of confidence. It went flat broke. I had taken a big gamble and lost. I contemplated how much better off I would have been if I had invested that same $24,000 in IBM stock, an alternative that I had considered.

But I was not broke, and I weathered the loss. What it did do was stimulate my imagination as to what could be done with an innovative new idea, a new invention, if handled properly. Why didn't I invent something? Why didn't I come up with a bright new idea? Here this Greek barber had come up with the idea of a self-lighting cigarette, and he had convinced me and hundreds of others that we all could make millions, hundreds of millions. It had failed, but some other idea could make it a reality, couldn't it? I began thinking along those lines. I wanted to become an inventor, an entrepreneur.

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We were vacationing in Southern California during the spring of 1954. One evening about 10:00 o'clock I was sitting around the swimming pool of the motel we were staying at in Pasadena and I was racking my brains as to what I might invent, and I went over the procedure quite methodically. I started out with the question - in what category would there be a good, widespread demand, a large market? My answer was, some new kitchen gadget, perhaps. All right, what could I invent for the kitchen that wasn't already in existence? My answer to that was to electrify some item that was now still done by hand. My next question was - what was, there left in the housewife's line of kitchen equipment that didn't already come equipped with an electric motor? There were electric mixers, electric garbage disposals, brooms had been replaced by vacuum cleaners. There were electric irons, electric coffee pots. I went down the line. Finally I came to the hand operated can opener. That was it! What the world needed was an electric can opener! Of course! I had my idea. Eureka! An electric can opener!

I went back to my workshop in Glenmore Gardens and started to try to design an electric can opener. What I had in mind was not just an electric can opener as such, but a push button electric can opener, one whereby you put the can in place, pushed a button and the power mechanism took over, punctured the can, spun the can, and released it when the button was released. I soon had a name for it as well. I would call it Canolectric. What the world needed was a Canolectric in every kitchen!

But now, to get back to the Glenmore Gardens. We lived there for a little more than five years. In looking back, I believe it was probably the most peaceful, pleasant and buoyant period of our life, at least the first half of it, before I became too heavily involved with putting the electric can opener on the market. Both the era and the area were auspicious for their well-being. This was during the earlier part of the Eisenhower administration, when the country was expanding, subdivisions were going up all over the landscape, and an ordinary young couple could buy a nice house for between $9000 and $12,000, with practically nothing down. The political horizon was still relatively unclouded by racial problems, or screaming "civil rights" agitators, nor were there then any serious threats of worldwide conflagration. True, the Korean war had raised considerable anxieties a few years earlier, but it had simmered down to an "incident" that we could now almost ignore and get on with our business. My wife and I were in our middle thirties, in good health, and financially relatively secure. We had a nice home of which we were proud, and a nice little family that included one daughter, of whom we were also proud.

Furthermore, the neighborhood in which we lived, especially on Morris Road, were our kind of people, and we enjoyed the social fraternization and friendships during those five years we lived there more than we have experienced in any other area. For one thing, we had much in common with our new neighbors everybody had just moved in on the street and we were all most receptive to making new friendships. The day the van arrived with our furniture, Mel Gillette, and his wife Ray, who lived across the street, came over and invited us over for dinner that night, an invitation which we gratefully accepted. They had just moved in the week before. There were still a number of houses under construction when we arrived, and new people were moving in every week. Most of them were young couples in our age bracket, successful young people who were moving up in the world, and were now moving into a nicer and better than average home. They were all White, no niggers within miles, and the threats of Mexicans, Asians or other mud races moving in never even occurred to anyone at that time.

We were a congenial group, and as the construction on the street was completed and all the houses occupied over the next several months, there was much getting together and partying. Every so often one neighbor or another, at the slightest pretext, would throw a bash, and we would each bring a bottle and have a hilarious party. There was no rowdiness, there were no nasty characters, just good clean merriment and fun. Here are some of the good neighbors I remember, although I don't by any means remember them all. There were the John Beumers, who lived next door to our left. They had a boy and a girl, John and Kathy, a little older than our Kim. Next to them lived the Tom Brooks family, who had three cute girls, not yet in their teens, two of them being twins. There was Jim and Jean Feitner, who had a highly intelligent little boy by the name of Jimmy, who was Kim's age and favorite playmate. A little later they had a daughter by the name of Sally. Next to the Gillettes across the street lived the Carl Martineaus. He was a professional engineer. His wife's name was Lou, and they had a little boy by the name of Pierre, who also was about Kim's age. Then there was the family of Joe and Margaret Meadows, who had a beautiful little blonde daughter by the name of Sandra, who was a few years older than Kim. Joe was a real jokester, and between him and Margaret, they were usually the life of the party. Further down the street lived the Jim Grooms. He was a real handsome fellow and was a major executive of the Hunt ketchup company in Hayward. Their little daughter Nancy was also one of Kim's favorite playmates. At the end of the street on the west end lived an older couple in their sixties. Their names were Ralph and Gladys Donahue, a jolly couple, although not in our age group, nevertheless were part of "our gang" and joined in our parties. Tragically to note, Gladys died of a heart attack while we were still in Glenmore Gardens.

This is not to say that everyone in Glenmore was happy, successful and financially independent. Like everywhere else, there were some people with severe problems. Our next-door neighbor to the east, who worked for the newly built Ford plant in nearby Milpitas, had been demoted in his job. Evidently, this seriously preyed on his mind, and he tragically over-reacted. One morning, as I was about on my way to drive to San Jose, I noticed a hearse in front of his house. The despondent man had not been able to tolerate the setback. He had taken a pistol and shot himself in the temple.

For the first two years at Glenmore, I was retired, a man of leisure, while I watched my eager beaver friends and neighbors going off to work every morning. Whereas I was improving our yard, building a workshop, designing my electric can opener and otherwise making myself useful, I did not exactly feel comfortable about being retired at my age while everyone else was going off to work. However, I tried not to let it bother me, and enjoyed myself. Whereas I couldn't get interested in golf, I enjoyed and played plenty of tennis in the nearby Glenmore courts. It was, and still is, my best game. My playing partner often was Bill Adcock, who was owner of a manufacturer's rep company in Oakland. Bill and Irma Adcock were also among our social circle.

Glenmore Gardens soon also had a church. It was a Presbyterian church and was headed by Pastor Tom Fuhr. He and his wife Ruth were a congenial couple who were also in our age bracket and we soon became good friends. We soon joined the church shortly after it was built, and on the 26th of November 1955, Henrie, Kim and I even went so far as to get ourselves baptized. Why, I'll never know, unless it was for social reasons. We still have the certificates in our files, and looking at them recently, I noted that it says we received the "Certificate of Batism". Batism is right. How batty can you get?

We did not go to church regularly, but we did contribute money to its maintenance. Actually, the sermons bored me stiff. One day Tom and I were discussing philosophy and religion, and I said to him, "Tom, there are a few things that bother me about this whole religious mess. Why is it that God would create all these millions of people and then let most of them go to hell and be tortured forever and a day? It doesn't make much sense to me, and frankly I don't believe in all this hocus-pocus." It didn't particularly bother him, and he didn't try to explain it to me. All he said was, "If that's what you believe, stick with it." I had a feeling he didn't really believe the stuff either. Tom and Ruth visited us in Florida about six years later and he was no longer in the ministry. They were off on a tour to Europe with a wealthy friend of theirs, who bankrolled their trip. Since we had the time and the means, my little family and I took any number of trips and outings in the nearby area, and in California at large. Some of our favorite outings included trips to Southern California, to Santa Barbara, to Monterey and Carmel, to the grape and wine country of the Russian River area north of San Francisco, and to the Boulder Creek area between San Jose and Santa Cruz. We also visited most of the choice national parks, such as Yosemite, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, where some magnificent stands of giant redwoods are located. Also, in this list of parks I should include the John Muir Woods in the Mt. Tamalpais State Park.

The Glenmore Gardens subdivision, started by a real estate salesman by the name of Jim Meyer in the cow pastures west of the then little village of Centerville, grew and grew and became an outstanding success as a fine community. Soon we had a shopping center, a fine school within easy walking distance, and in which Kim enrolled a little later. We also had tennis courts, a community swimming pool and a community center. All these were conveniently located only two or three blocks away from our home. But best of all, we had as fine a group of people living there as you could expect to find anywhere in the United States.

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Milestone Twenty-Six: Glenmore Gardens and Canolectric

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Milestone Twenty-Seven: Seven Weeks in Europe

By the early spring of 1955 I had worked out the mechanical design of my push-button electric can opener and had also built a working model in my workshop. Using a five dollar sewing machine motor to power the unit, I was satisfied that it was feasible and commercially practical to proceed with the project and go to the next two stages (a) manufacturing design, and (b) production. At this point I had no experience, no idea as to how to proceed with either one. I had some vague idea of building a plant near Centerville and go into manufacturing.

On further contemplation, I came to the conclusion that maybe I should have it engineered and manufactured in Germany. Undoubtedly, I thought, they could produce it cheaper there than it could be done in the United States. It was an assumption, not necessarily a fact. Anyway, the idea intrigued me, even had a hint of romance to it. Why not go over there and explore the situation?

I made the necessary preparations passport, visas, etc. I went to a travel agency and had them reserve passage on the U. S. S. United States both outward and return. (Flying overseas was not so common back in 1955.) While I was at it I was also going to visit a few nearby countries, France, Italy and Austria, but I had no prearranged schedule. I didn't know where exactly I was going, nor whom I was going to see. I was going to play it by ear, to explore the opportunities as they presented themselves.

Jean and Jim Feitner, two doors down, gave me a going away party - another good excuse for a Norris Road bash. Then during the last week in March I took off. I had $1500.00 cash in my pocket, which was to cover all my expenses while in Europe - travel, meals, hotel bills, etc. (Although this may seem very little, it proved to be quite adequate. We must remember that travel expenses in those days were somewhere between one-fifth and one-tenth of what they are today.) Embarking at the San Francisco airport I flew to New York, staying there at a hotel for two or three nights. In the meantime I took in a few of the sights there, such as going to the top of the Empire State Building, visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art and having dinner at Jack Dempsey's Restaurant. I even had my picture taken with Dempsey and shook the fist that shook Gene Tunney's chin back in 1926.

Then the following morning I took a taxi to New York harbor and boarded the U.S.S. United States. Back in 1955 she was one of the Queens of the ocean liners, if not THE Queen. She was the flagship of the United States Lines and boasted of being the fastest ocean liner afloat, having established new Atlantic speed records, both eastbound and westbound, on her maiden voyage, July 3, 1952. She won the Blue Ribbon Speed Trophy handily: eastbound three days, ten hours 40 minutes; westbound three days, 12 hours, 12 minutes, between Ambrose Lightship, New York and Bishop's Rock, England. She was 990 feet in length, (almost five city blocks) had a beam of 101.5 ft. and a gross tonnage of 53,330. She was manned by a crew and officers totaling over 1000 personnel. So here I was, ready to recross the Atlantic Ocean, back to Europe, from which I had come 31 years earlier. However, the route was different, whereas in 1924 we had sailed from La Rochelle, France, to Havana, Cuba, and then to Veracruz, Mexico, now I was sailing from New York to Southampton, England, then to Le Havre, France. I was traveling tourist class and was assigned a cabin that I shared with two other men. The cabin was relatively small, but then there were so many other diversions and entertainments aboard that practically the only time spent in the cabin was as a place to sleep. The dining room was vast and luxurious and the meals sumptuous. In the dining room seating I was assigned a table with another young man and two young ladies, an arrangement that proved compatible for all.

I don't remember the names of the other two table companions, but one of the two ladles was named Linda Schreck. She was a tall brunette, and she was going back home to her parents in Bamberg, Germany. She had been married to an American G.I. and had lived with him in the United States for a number of years. Their marriage had proved to be an unhappy one, and now newly divorced, she was rejoining her six-year-old daughter who had already preceded her to Germany by a year or two to live with her grandparents. She told me much about life in Germany during the Hitler years (she had once as a little girl had the honor of presenting him with a bouquet of flowers), about the terrors of the war, and the coming of the conquering American occupation troops.

The voyage eastward was not overly calm, but tolerably so, at least below the seasickness level for me. As we approached the English coast on the evening of the fifth day, I remember standing at the rail. Also watching the approach were two elderly English ladles, returning to England after a long absence. I remember their emotional reaction, tears in their eyes, as they recounted the glories of dear old England and how great it was to return to their native land.

After being docked in Southampton for a few hours, we crossed the English Channel during the night and disembarked at Le Havre, France, early the next morning. Many of us took the boat train from there directly to Paris.

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Once in Paris I checked into a hotel somewhere in the downtown section. No sooner had I settled In my room than the telephone rang. Who in the world could be calling me here, I wondered. "Hello, Ben, this Is Gretchen!" said a feminine voice sweetly, "You remember me, don't you?" Gretchen? No, I don't. You must have the wrong number. I don't even know any Gretchen, I said naively. She gave me some more sweet talk, surely I remembered her! When I insisted I did not, she finally agreed she had the wrong number indeed and hung up. Not having been to Paris before, except when I was six years old, I was a little puzzled, but passed it off as a mistake, poor girl. I called the desk and asked, what was that all about? The man at the desk assured me, tongue in cheek of course, ah yes, undoubtedly she just dialed the wrong number.

I stayed in Paris for three or four days and saw most of the major sights. I visited the Louvre, and was tremendously impressed with the tremendous number of famous paintings, and also by the vast collection of Egyptian artifacts. In fact, it was this viewing that first sparked my interest in the great civilization of Ancient Egypt. I went to the top of the Eiffel Tower, to the Tulleries Gardens, to les Invalides where Napoleon is entombed. I took pictures of the Arch of Triumph and the Place de la Concorde. I visited two of her famous cathedrals, Notre Dame and the Church of the Sacre Coeur. I was impressed with the historical Paris, but was disgusted by the service and the sleazy way in which waiters, busboys and others in the industry repeatedly tried to rip off the tourists.

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From Paris I went to Heidelberg, Germany. Sixteen years earlier, in 1939, it had been my objective to go to Heidelberg and study electrical engineering. However, as I have related earlier, the war intervened and instead I went to the Universities of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, respectively, and earned my degree. But now I was in Heidelberg and I was excited about it. I wrote back home, "After sixteen years I finally made it to Heidelberg!" It was a beautiful city, and, as the locale of the romantic operetta "The Student Prince", it justified its reputation. I took the cable railroad up the side of the mountain to the Heidelberg Castle, hundreds of years old, and which embodied the architecture and also the ruins of construction representing eras several hundred years apart. I went all the way to the top of the mountain on the cable car and viewed the beautiful Neckar River below and the city through which it flowed. I went to their famous beer cellars and although I don't particularly care for beer, I drank their famous beer and watched as some of the hefty blonde waitresses carried as many as five large mugs of beer in each hand.

I also visited the university buildings and they were somewhat of a disappointment. Compared to the spacious wide-open campuses of Saskatchewan and other universities in Canada and the U.S.A., the grounds at Heidelberg were cramped and the buildings, of course, were very old. But there was a lot of history and romantic lore in the atmosphere. Altogether it was, and is, a beautiful city. Next I went to Cologne (Koln) where the famous Cologne Cathedral is located, with its twin 555-foot high spires. I stayed in the Kolner Dom hotel, right across the street from the cathedral. Only half the original hotel was standing, and even much of that had been rebuilt. The rest of the hotel site still had a large crater on the grounds where bombs had evidently blown much of the hotel into rubble. However, miraculously the famous cathedral itself had evidently escaped major damage.

But I was in Germany to explore the prospects of having my electric can opener designed and manufactured, I reminded myself. I contacted some smaller electric motor manufacturers. The German economy at that time was still hurting and every small or large company was most eager to do business with an American company, or any other, for that matter. So they were most accommodating and easy to contact. However, the idea that they could produce a small electric motor of the kind I was looking for any cheaper than we could in the United States didn't seem too promising.

Then I made contact with the largest electrical company in Germany. This was Siemens Electric, who were the General Electric of that country. I called them in advance (I forget what city they were in) and told them I was coming, and I wanted to talk to them about manufacturing an electrical appliance. They were all ears. They sent a chauffeur driven limousine to meet me at the railroad station when I arrived, and had convened a panel of half a dozen engineers and top officials to hear my proposition, as we sat around a large conference table. They all spoke a fairly passable English as well as German, of course. I could speak a passable German as well as English, but I kept the conversation in English. So what was my proposition, they asked. Well, I said, I was interested in having an electric kitchen appliance manufactured for me, and then exported to the United States, where I would market it. Great! What was the particular appliance? I began to waffle. After all, I had not at that time applied for any patents to protect my idea, not even un the United States, and I did not want to give it away gratis, to them or anyone else, so that they could pick it up and run with it on their own. So I was in a dilemma. I realized that the first order of business was for me to get my patents on record before I went around spreading the idea of an electric can opener to all and sundry. I told them I could not divulge the item at this time. There was an angry murmur around the table. They began talking to each other in German, speculating what the item might be. I was listening. After about an hour the conference ended, with, of course, no tangible results.

I learned that the German Patent Office was located in Stuttgart, and that this city also had an ample supply of patent lawyers in its environs. I headed for Stuttgart and checked in at the Bahnhoff Hotel, about half a mile from the railroad station. It was to be my home for the next few weeks. After selecting a law firm from several available, we went to work in earnest of making the necessary drawings and spelling out all the details of the apparatus in German. The attorneys and also the secretaries were highly efficient and soon we had it all put together. Incidentally, while I was there in Stuttgart, I solved one particular facet of the design that I had not resolved before I left home. That item was a delay clutch in the apparatus so that the can could be pierced and firmly held in place before the drive started spinning the can around. This was important, since otherwise the drive had a tendency to throw the can off the drive wheel before it could be pierced.

After the patent application was wrapped up, I still had to stay around and wait for the processing and official approval of the patent office, which came after a week or so. Prices in Germany at that time were extremely reasonable, including attorney's fees. Hotel rates, meals, taxis, all were unbelievably low. Anyway, now I had my patent, at least a German patent, and it was all paid for. Although I now had my patent in my pocket, I did not go back to Siemens Electric to present my idea. By this time I was convinced that the idea of having the can opener manufactured in Germany and then shipped to the United States was not a feasible economic arrangement. I abandoned the idea and decided to spend the rest of my time sightseeing in Germany and Europe. I had about two and a half weeks left before my scheduled sailing back to the United States.

I was particularly interested in the Hitler scenario, and first went to Nurnberg, where the gigantic Hitler rallies had been held. It was an interesting, historic old city with massive high walls and towers surrounding the ancient city. It still showed many of the ravages of the recent war. Even the thick ancient walls were pockmarked with hits from bombs and artillery fire. I visited what was left of the grounds and buildings where the huge annual Nazi rallies had been held in the 1930's. Most of what structures had existed were now completely demolished. I also visited the chambers where the Nurnberg trials had been held. It was all rather depressing to see all the former pomp and glory now smashed by the parasitic hand of the Jew.

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Next I traveled to Munich. I had no sooner checked into a hotel when the phone rang. This time it was a man. He had a clipped British accent, but I could also detect the German origins. He explained that he had obtained my name from some German trade agency, and understood that I was looking for some trade contacts. He was most friendly and accommodating and offered to show me the city and help me in any way he could in making contacts with any number of different business establishments. His name was Fred Bleger.

Herr Bleger was undoubtedly one of the finest gentlemen I have ever met any time, anywhere. He was five years older than I, about 42. I learned more about Germany during the Hitler era before the war, about the war itself, and about post-war Germany, first hand from him, than I have from any other source. I also learned much about the German economy and business as it was in 1955 from him. Fred Bieger had been a member of the Nazi Party, had been an officer in the German Wehrmacht during the war. He had learned to speak excellent English during a prolonged stay in Britain before the war. He had fought in the Egyptian campaign, as well as several others, and lastly, on the Russian front, where he was severely wounded. One of the things that he told me about the German tragedy was that things were a thousand times worse after Germany capitulated to the victorious "allies" than they were during the ghastly war itself.

Without a doubt, meeting Fred was the highlight of my trip. He had a car and he took me to any number of interesting places in Germany. He played the role of secretary, confidante, and business adviser to a beautiful redheaded young lady in her late thirties who owned an import-export business she had inherited from her father. Whether there was any romantic Interest between her and Herr Bieger I couldn't tell, since their association always seemed on a business level. Anyway, they had a nice car to travel the countryside and seemingly, the time. What established a particular bond between Fred and myself right from the beginning was that he had found one American who was not only pro-German but also pro-Hitler. Besides, I could speak German, if not fluently, at least passably well and although I was more comfortable speaking English, he repeatedly encouraged me to speak in German. We had an excellent dinner together the first night, and drank several glasses of good German wines.

The next day, after showing me around Munich, the beer hall where Hitler had spoken, some good restaurants and other places of interest, the three of us drove south from Munich to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and then to Oberammergau, some of the most picturesque towns in Germany. We then went to a famous ski lodge on the side of the Zugspitze, one of the higher peaks in the Alpine range, and which happens to sit on the border between Germany and Austria. The weather had turned colder by this time and when we arrived at the ski lodge it was snowing. But at that altitude there was still an abundant snow pack from the winter (this was in the middle of April) and skiing was in full swing. It was a beautiful spot and a beautiful sight. We spent the night at the lodge, ate sumptuous meals, but did not do any skiing.

We then drove on to Innsbruck, Austria, and spent a day there. Fred was one of the best of tour guides, and knew all the history and all the places. After about a three-day circuit that took in several smaller places of interest, we returned to Munich, just in time to take off for Hanover, where the annual Heavy Industries Fair was going on, from April 24 to May 3. This was the largest commercial fair of its kind in Germany and took in a wide variety of exhibits   huge cranes hundreds of feet tall, tractors, bulldozers, farm machinery, electrical motors, machine tools, and every other aspect of heavy industry. But the fair also embraced an unlimited variety of industries outside of that field, such as textiles, office equipment, china, ceramics, glassware, watches and clocks, hardware and cutlery, kitchenwares, and even toys. I don't know how much area the Fair Grounds took in, but I am sure it consisted of several hundred acres. Although similar fairs, some more specialized, were held in Frankfurt in the spring and in the fall, also in Cologne and Munich, nevertheless Hanover was the biggest of them all. There were thousands of exhibitors from all over the world and tens of thousands of visitors and interested dealers.

Since the hotels in Hanover would be booked solid far in advance for such a large influx, many private residences offered limited accommodations to the overflow of guests. I don't know where Fred and the red headed business associate stayed, but he found me bed and board with a nice German couple. Their rented apartment consisted of only three rooms - a living room, a kitchen and one bedroom. I slept on the couch in the living room. Although the husband was at work most of the time, the wife was a most talkative hostess and told me much (in German) about Germany during the thirties and during and after the war.

There were so many business deals being made right and left before my very eyes that soon I got caught up in the spirit of the export-import trade. There were stories bandied about of how one broker had consummated a deal whereby he had sold German locomotives to the Indian government and had made a three million dollar commission on that deal alone, and other similar stories. I was offered any number of "deals", and, of course, Fred Bleger, being in the business, recommended and encouraged such offers. There would be a 5% commission, or override, in the contract for him. Finally, I signed two different contracts with two different companies that I would import a specific gadget they made in a certain minimum quantity per year (or month) and that also I would be protected as being the sole and exclusive agent for that item in the United States. Both items were novel, but unnecessary gadgets associated with the automobile.

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Time was running out before my scheduled sailing back to America, and there were a few other places I wanted to visit before I left Europe. During the ocean voyage on the USS United States, Linda Schreck had invited me to visit with her family in the historic city of Bamberg in Bavaria. I gave her a call to see if the offer was still good and she said she would be most delighted for me to come. I boarded a train for Bamberg.

Linda met me at the station when I arrived in the late afternoon. The first question I asked her was: how did she like being back in Germany? She said it was terrible, she hated it. She and her six-year-old daughter were living with her parents and her younger brother, the latter in his early twenties. She told me she was practically being treated as a pariah by her relatives and her former friends. They deeply resented the fact that she had married an American G.I., and now that the marriage was kaput, it served her right, they said. All this reflected a deeper hostility the majority of Germans had for Americans, something I had sensed before. Although at the Hanover Fair, and at other places, I had found the Germans were most polite and friendly, still, beneath the surface they harbored a deep resentment, and for good reasons. The Americans (controlled by their Jewish overlords) without any meaningful provocation, had come from across three thousand miles of ocean, to smash their cities and kill their people. The outrageous behavior of the occupying G.I.'s (including a horde of savage niggers) in raping their women and flaunting their arrogance in the post-war period had not assuaged the situation any, only aggravated it. (For further details about the atrocities heaped upon the Germans, read Avenge Dresden! in Racial Loyalty, Nos. 51 and 52.) Linda and I walked to their apartment, which was in an old building, (all buildings were old) located at 2565 Luisen Strasse 3. There I met the rest of the family   her little daughter, her brother and her father and mother.

They were all very accommodating, and her mother immediately pleaded for me to join them for dinner. I did not want to inconvenience them, especially on such short notice, so I declined and said I would take Linda out to dinner instead. This, I believe was a mistake on my part, since I believe they felt hurt that I had rejected their hospitality, but I did not realize it at the time. Anyway, after some further conversation, Linda and I left to go to the restaurant where her brother was a waiter. I will never forget, before we left the apartment, her little daughter poignantly asked, "Kommst du zuruck?" (Are you coming back?) The little dear evidently had been left without her mother so many times that every time her mother now walked out of the house the poor little thing wondered whether she would ever be back.

After dinner we walked back to their apartment, where I had a lengthy conversation with her father. Otto Schreck had been an official in the Nazi party and an officer in the Wehrmacht. He was tall, ramrod straight, and of stern, no-nonsense disposition. He now had some minor government position. When I tried to talk to him about politics and about Hitler, he steered away from the subject and said he would never again have anything to do with politics. He reminded me several times, "We remember 1945." Evidently, he, like so many others in his category, had been tortured, put through the mill, and thoroughly "de-Nazified." His fighting spirit had been broken and "We will not forget 1945", he kept telling me. This was now 1955, ten years later.

Bamberg is an historic and most interesting old Bavarian city. It was founded in the tenth century and owes what prominence it has enjoyed due to being one of the two Catholic archbishoprics in Bavaria. (The other is in Munich.) In this ancient kingdom of Bavaria, whose population is still 70% Roman Catholic, the power of the Catholic church shaped much of its history and is reflected in some of its fine architecture. The Bamberg cathedral is one of Germany's grandest Romanesque edifices, built in the tenth century. Other notable buildings are the St. Michael, the St. Martin and the St. Mary churches. Linda and I visited all of these the next day, as well as the historic old town hall, and the picturesque 10th century Altenburg Castle. I still have a picture of the latter.

Late in the afternoon I said goodbye to Linda and her family and took a flight to Rome.

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My flight was due to land at about midnight, a rather late time to be arriving in a strange city without any previous hotel reservations, or, for that matter, even knowing the name of a single hotel. Fortunately, I overheard two young fellows across the aisle in the plane talking to each other, and they were discussing where they were planning to stay when they got to Rome. Finally, they came to the conclusion they would share one room and save expenses. I latched on to this opportunity and asked the fellow who was giving up his reservation whether he would mind if I picked it up in his place. No problem. When we arrived I took a taxi to the designated hotel and used his reservation. Not a bad hotel, but next day when I had the time to pick and choose, I moved to the Quirinale, which remained my home for the rest of my stay in Rome. While in Rome I tried to take in most of the major sights. I spent quite a lot of time in the Vatican complex, ogling St. Peter's massive insides and outsides, the endless exhibition of statues, paintings and ornate, gilt covered columns, all the exquisite works of great White artisans and geniuses of many past generations. Standing in the huge plaza, I even saw Pope Plus XI in one of the Vatican windows, pointlessly waving his hands and "blessing" the thousands of gullible yokels below. It was early in the season, and, anyway, back in 1955 the tourist floods were not anywhere as rampant as they are today. As a result, when I was in the Sistine Chapel, I was able to leisurely lie on my back on one of the benches and view Michelangelo's vaunted ceiling at my convenience for as long as I wished. When I was back at the same chapel with my family in 1967, the place swarmed with milling mobs, led by dozens of tour guides, speaking Japanese and every other language. Just going down the passageway to the chapel was like being in midstream and seeing millions of fish swimming in two different directions, one coming and one going.

Viewing the ruins of Ancient Rome at that time, I would say, sparked my initial interest in the greatness and grandeur of those ancient Romans. Seeing the ruins of the ancient Capitol, the gigantic Coliseum, the Baths of Caracalla, Hadrian's Tomb, made me realize that there had dwelt a superior breed of men two thousand years ago, of whom I had known, but had not taken sufficient note. Now I was seeing first hand the remarkable remains of an astounding civilization. Why had it collapsed, I wondered. Of special interest were the art museums of Rome. I visited the National Museum (Musco Nazionale Romano) and also the Vatican Museum and was especially impressed by the vast collections of the latter. Also, I attended the Rome Opera house and saw and heard the Opera "Faust" by Charles Francois Gounod.

After about four days in Rome, I took a plane to Nice, on the French Riviera. The coastline was beautiful, the sea a brilliant blue-green, and the weather most pleasant. From Nice I took a bus to Monaco and Monte Carlo, visited the Casino and took in some of the other sites.

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From Nice I flew to Paris, and from Paris I took the boat train back to Le Havre. After I had taken my seat in the train, I looked out of the open window to view the people on the station platform that were about to board. There was a tall dapper young man that stood out from the crowd. He was about six foot two, very thin and although he wore a homburg, his bright red hair was conspicuous. He was talking and gesticulating most energetically. Soon he entered the railway car I was in and with his companions sat down a few seats away from me. From the loud conversation with which he continued to harangue his traveling companions inside the car, I soon learned that he was a young Mormon missionary who had completed his two-year stint in Belgium and was now returning to the United States. He was noisily broadcasting all the sins of the Roman Catholic priests he had encountered during his stay in Belgium, how they fornicated with the nuns and others of the fair sex, and how many children that obviously resembled various priests abounded in the country of Belgium. He continued in this vein all the way to Le Havre. Sitting a few seats away also were two young Catholic women who could not help but hear his loud voice, and they were fuming and fidgeting at what they were hearing. I expected a battle royal to erupt at any moment, but the tirade and the controlled agitation continued all the way to Le Havre.

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Back on the U.S.S. United States on the fourth day of May, the voyage started out uneventfully enough. About a day out on the high seas, we ran into a severe storm. The rest of the voyage was less than fun, more like sheer survival. At times as the thirty-foot waves hit the big ship broadside, the whole ship would shudder. A ship can roll, pitch and yaw. The United States did all three and when there was a following sea, many a time the stem end would be so far up, the propellers would be out of the water and the motors and propellers would suddenly rev up to a high speed whose vibrations could be felt throughout the entire vessel.

During that storm, most people were too sick to come out of their cabins, and the dining room was practically empty. I remember my table was near the outside window and as the ship slowly rolled from one side to the other. It always felt uncomfortably close to the point of no return. As I sat down for breakfast (alone at my table) I would start out eating dry rolls, recommended to settle your stomach. Nevertheless, I made sure I knew where the exit to the nearest toilet was, in case I had to make a dash for it. Was I afraid we were going to sink? Not really, but the possibility entered my mind several times. The situation reminded me of some quotation I had once read, "Oh God, thy ocean is so large and my ship is so small." The USS United States was five blocks long, not small by any means, but nevertheless, she was pretty much at the mercy of an angry sea. This, I decided, was no way to cross the Atlantic.

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We docked in New York harbor on May 9, and after going through immigration and customs, I collected my baggage and took a taxi to the airport. By that time it was late in the evening and I boarded a night flight to San Francisco, after I had called my wife to inform her of my time of arrival.

Next morning she and my sweet little four-year-old daughter Kim were there to meet me. Also there was my young friend, Al Miller, from San Jose. He was putting together a cosmetic company whose one lone product was a hand lotion called Lanoglove. I happened to have a small investment in his company. The four of us had breakfast in the airport dining room and after exchanging a volume of news, the three of us drove back to Glenmore Gardens. It was good to be home again.

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Milestone Twenty-Eight: Canolectric All the Way

When I left for Europe my main objective had been to explore the possibilities of having my electric can opener engineered and manufactured in Germany, if they could do it for less per unit cost. What I had learned is they could not, and that what with shipping, time delays, excise duties, etc., it was not economically feasible. Now, back home, I was also back to square one, except for one thing. The Hanover Fair had opened up the possibilities that there were a number of items available that could be imported, distributed and sold in this country at considerable profit. In fact, there were any number of American importing companies doing just that. Why go to the expense and hassle of manufacturing anything when you could import somebody else's product already made, waiting for buyers? So, I had an important decision to make. Should I pursue the development and manufacture of the push-button electric can opener or should I go into the import business? I already had snagged two exclusive items, frivolous as they were. One was a little plastic, many-jointed little horse, that sat on the dashboard of a car. When connected with the carburetor intake by a plastic tube, it performed a number of interesting antics, reflecting the status of the vehicle, whether it was accelerating, slowing down, cruising, or whatever. The other was a two-cup electric coffee pot that plugged into the cigarette lighter on the dash. It could come in handy when camping or traveling.

The first thing I did was consult with my friend Bill Adcock, with whom I played a lot of tennis and who had a well established business as a hardware wholesaler. The next thing I did was call on a few hardware and automotive stores to get their reaction. The results of both of these surveys were not too encouraging. In the meantime I had jumped the gun and already had some stationery and business cards printed up with the caption of "Klassen Importing Co." These I had printed by the local Centerville newspaperman, who, sensing a story, came over to interview me.

For a while I dallied. Then the urge to be a bonafide inventor and the hopes of becoming a multi-millionaire business tycoon prevailed. I made a resolute decision: come hell or high water, I would put the Canolectric on the market. This required a lot of doing.

So to get started. On September 16, 1955 I incorporated Klassen Enterprises, Inc., under the corporation laws of the State of California. The corporation was authorized to issue 500,000 shares of stock, with a par value of $1.00 per share. My attorney was Gene Rhodes, a personable young fellow my age who also lived in Glenmore Gardens. The incorporating directors were Wm. E. Adcook, who had a hardware wholesale business; Albert J. Miller, of San Jose, who owned Milco, Inc., engaged in the manufacture of the previously mentioned Lanoglove hand lotion; Gene Rhodes; my wife Henrie Etta, and myself, as president.

My neighbor next door, John Beumer, was an engineer for an electronics company by the name of Ampex in Redwood City, across the bay. Across the street from him was a young engineer and draftsman by the name of Charles Wilson, who worked for John. I showed them both my working model and they were very much impressed. I persuaded the young draftsman to make up a set of engineering drawings that could be translated into production blueprints. This was in October of 1955. Over a period of a few months he completed these drawings. In the meantime, I designed an attractive housing and had a plastics craftsman by the name of Chapman (company name: Chapman Plastics, Berkeley, California) construct a white plastic cover for the unit.

Next I had a machine shop, Engineered Instruments of Hayward, try to make a model according to the blueprints. After spending several weeks and $400.00, they were not doing a good job and I cancelled their contract. I found a machine shop outfit by the name of Frisch & Herzberg in San Leandro who were more capable. They did a good job in making a model that could be a prototype and could be used for demonstration purposes. (Feb., 1956.)

Now that I had a working demonstration model to show, we went over to Hunt's Ketchup plant in Hayward and obtained a carload of new unused tin cans to open, and we were in business. I realized that it would take money, a lot more than I had, to put the product on the market, and that I would need investors from the public. One positive benefit that accrued from my previous boondoggle investment with the Commercial Tobacco Co. was that I learned something about corporate structure that I had not known before. I learned that the initial promoter could make a public stock offering and at the same time retain an equal number of promotional shares for himself, thereby still keep control of the company he founded. At our Director's Meeting on March 5, 1956, we authorized our attorney, Gene Rhodes, to apply for a permit authorizing our corporation to issue and sell 100,000 shares at $1 par value per share. This application was made to the California Corporations Commission, and limited our stock sales exclusively to residents of California only. By March 20, the desired permit was granted.

On March 26, 1956, I filed an application with the United States Patent Office for a patent on my "Electrically Operated Can Opener." Handling this application for me were a couple of Jewish attorneys in Oakland by the name of Gardner and Zimmerman. We were asking for 19 separate claims in our application. It would be another 13 months before we were to receive a favorable response to that application, April 23, 1957, to be exact.

At the beginning of April I leased a one room office at 1079 "B" Street, Suite 222, in downtown Hayward and found myself a "sales manager" by the name of Al Bierman. Al had been sales manager for Al Miller of the aforementioned Lanoglove company (Milco, Inc.) which was now hurting badly for cash. At the April board meeting the directors voted both myself and Al Bierman a salary of $500 a month. We were now ready to demonstrate our "baby" and sell securities to the public.

So now I was in business. I had an attractive product to show and demonstrate. We had a patent application in the mill to protect our invention. We now had an office to work from, a permit to sell stock, and a vocal sales manager to help sell that stock.

At about this time I also acquired a most efficient secretary and bookkeeper. In preparing some of our previous literature for promoting the Canolectric and also the stock sales, we employed a local printer who had a shop in Castro Valley. His name was Sam Totaro. He did $500.00 worth of printing for us and decided to take payment in 500 shares of Klassen Enterprises, Inc. stock. While we were over at his house to present the stock offering circular, his wife, Louise, and her mother were also present. She seemed hostile to the idea of buying the stock and was forthright in saying so. However, Sam went ahead anyway, and used to drop in at our office just about every other day. We told him we were looking for a good secretary, and he told us that his wife Louise was looking for just such a job. I called her up and asked her to stop in for an interview. When she did, I was duly impressed and hired her on the spot. She proved to be one of the most intelligent, loyal and efficient secretaries I have ever had the good fortune of hiring. Soon after she began working she too was highly impressed with the merits of Canolectric and soon bought an extra 50 shares on her own account. One day Al and I were sitting at our desks in our Hayward office when in walked a young man by the name of Cecil W. Boswell. He had heard of our electric can opener, and now that he saw it with his own eyes he was grinning from ear to ear. He, too, had been thinking about the need for an electric can opener, he said. When he saw our demonstrator neatly cut open a number of cans we had on hand for that purpose, he became even more excited. Cecil was from San Francisco, where he had an office at 1139 Mission St. He was sales representative for Robbins & Myers, whose H.Q. were in Springfield, Ohio. When Cecil Boswell walked out of our office he was an enthusiastic promoter of Canolectric, and he was just dying to tell the rest of the Robbins & Myers sales staff in Springfield of his newly found gem. This he did with gusto at their next regularly scheduled sales meeting.

The next thing I knew I got a telephone call from Springfield, Ohio. It was an invitation to demonstrate our appliance to the management, all our traveling expenses paid. This I did, taking Al Bierman along with me. The top officials were impressed. Unfortunately, the president of Robbins & Myers, namely, Albert W. McGregor, was out of town. A week or so later I was asked to come back and demonstrate our Canolectric again, in front of the president. This I did and he also seemed to be favorably impressed that our invention was a winner.

The follow-up was that Robbins & Myers made us an offer under the terms of which, if they could have an exclusive contract to manufacture our can opener, they agreed to advance approximately $50,000.00 in tooling costs, which costs were to be repaid at the rate of $1.00 per unit upon the first 50,000 units manufactured.

Robbins & Myers would also do the advance engineering on the unit. There was one tough stipulation, though. Robbins & Myers wanted an equivalent amount of collateral to make sure that we would live up to our side of the bargain. This I met by pledging the remainder of my notes of the Silver Springs land deal, the balance of which at this time still amounted to roughly $115,000. The culmination of these negotiations was that on September 17, 1956, Klassen Enterprises, Inc., and Robbins & Myers signed a binding contract on the above terms.

Robbins & Myers had previously bought up an old established firm by the name of Hunter Fan and Ventilating Company, who were located in Memphis, Tennessee. Our appliance was to be manufactured by Hunter, whose manager was Frank S. Brady, and whose chief engineer was a brittle, but brilliant, fellow by the name of Carl Buttner, who had immigrated from Germany back in 1928. From here on out most of my trips now were to meet with the Memphis people, to coordinate design, prices for manufacturing, packaging and other details. Most of the times when in Memphis I stayed either at the Peabody Hotel, or the King Cotton.

Up to this time Al Bierman and I had been selling our stock directly to whomever we could, as rank amateurs. We had so far sold only about 19,000 shares. In the meantime I had been financing the company expenses strictly out of my own pocket, loaning the company a few thousand or so every month, since we were prohibited from using any of the stock proceeds unless and until we had sold a certain minimum amount, which as I recall, had to be 100,000 shares. Before that happened I had loaned the corporation a total of $25,500. Now that we had the Robbins & Myers contract in our pocket, it was a new ball game. With our improved prospects we now went to a brokerage house in Oakland to have the pros do the stock selling job for us.

We contacted Lester M. Grant, of Stephenson, Leydecker & Co. at 1404 Franklin St. in Oakland. Les Grant was an up and coming young man, in his early thirties, and was also vice-mayor of the City of Oakland. Although he was only a salesman in the firm, he nevertheless was one of their best and had a wide range of contacts. We demonstrated our Canolectric by setting it on his desk and opening several cans. He, too, was immediately fascinated. He took a few days to check us out, and personally called President McGregor of Robbins & Myers to confirm whether we really had a contract as we said we did. When he confirmed that we did indeed, Les came over to see us at our office. He said he had talked it over with the head of his stock company and they were willing to sell our stock. We soon reached a written agreement and were off and running. Finally we were in the big leagues, I thought to myself. Already I could see millions dangling before my eyes.

In the meantime, we had managed to get quite a bit of good publicity in the major newspapers in and around the San Francisco area and the business community was beginning to take note that maybe we had a hot item on our hands. In August of 1956 I received a call from Forrest Tanser, one of the executives of the brokerage firm of Sutro & Co. He said he had a wealthy client who might be interested in buying my interest in Canolectric. We went over to his San Francisco office and demonstrated our prize baby to him and his elderly client, a Jew by the name of Adrian Falk. A few days later I received a call from Tanser, slating that his client was willing to buy my interest for $250,000 to be paid $50,000 down and $50,000 a year over the next four years, and at the same time I was to stay with the company at a salary of $25,000 a year. I considered the offer for a while and we discussed it at the next directors meeting on September 3. I finally called Forrest Tanser and told him I wasn't selling, the offer just wasn't good enough. He was mad, and hung up on me. At about this time I also received another offer from a San Jose real estate tycoon. He offered me $150,000 cash, no strings and no delay. I also considered that offer for a while, then turned it down. I felt I had a big thing, I was going to ride it all the way, and nobody was going to rob me of its ultimate benefits.

In October I made another trip to Memphis to further negotiate and finalize engineering, styling and production plans. During the same month I negotiated and signed a contract with Stephenson Leydecker in Oakland to sell the 80,000 remaining shares, allowing them a 15% commission. Gene Rhodes applied to the Corporation Commission for approval of this arrangement and it was granted.

During the month of December we received an invitation from Robbins & Myers to display our demonstration model of the Canolectric in their booth at the Chicago Housewares Show in January, an offer we readily accepted. This show was an annual affair and was undoubtedly the largest in the country. It was staged on the Chicago Pier premises, a gigantic building complex and layout extending far into Lake Michigan.

Taking along our prized demonstrator model and an ample supply of tin cans, Al Bierman and I flew into Chicago, lodging at the Drake Hotel. Robbins & Myers had a large booth at which they displayed not only their own products, but also those of Hunter Fan and Ventilating Co. The major segment of their combined sales staff was also on hand and we got to know all of them quite intimately during the week of January 16 to 23, 1957. They were a good, congenial crew.

Our push-button electric can opener immediately attracted an unusual amount of attention, more so than all the myriad of products R & M and

Hunter Fan had on display in their booth. This, of course, evoked some mixed feelings among their sales staff, who, although glad they had latched onto a hot item, nevertheless, they had their own interests to promote and their own wares to display. Al Bierman claimed we had the most sensational new product at the show, and whether true or not, we did attract a tremendous amount of attention. General Electric executives came to look it over, the president of Oster Mfg. Co. came by several times to take notes. Even the president of Sears, Roebuck, a fat little Jew by the name of General Woods asked me to demonstrate it for him, after which we got into a lively disputation, with him lecturing me as to what was wrong with it. Having an open little penknife in his fat little hand, he emphasized his last point by cutting a scratch on the metal plate of the flip-up lid of my can opener, an arrogant gesture that left me furious. I still have that demonstrator, scratch and all.

After the first two days, we called Les Grant back in Oakland and reported the enthusiastic reception we were getting from the trade, and sent him a telegram to that effect. When we got back to California, we found that that telegram had given the sales crew at Stephenson Leydecker a strong shot in the arm, and stock sales were booming. Our trip to Chicago had proved doubly beneficial - both to stock sales and responses from jobbers and dealers in the appliance field. In fact, we soon received a call from Sears, Roebuck saying that they were interested in discussing a major purchase contract.

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Milestone Twenty-Eight: Canolectric All the Way

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Milestone Twenty-Nine: Discovering Florida

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For the last several years, during the middle fifties, I had become intrigued with the stories about the attractions and the rising real estate opportunities in the State of Florida, especially the east coast of South Florida. Now in February of 1957, as I was approaching my 39th birthday, I felt that after working hard for two years putting my Canolectric deal together that I deserved a vacation. I had to make another business trip to Hunter Fan at this time anyway, so I decided I would take my wife and daughter with me, and we would go on from Memphis and explore South Florida. We had never been there. Shouldn't everybody make a trip to Florida at least once? After making the necessary reservations, the three of us took off in the latter half of February, prime time in South Florida. When we arrived in Miami the weather was absolutely perfect, bright, sunny and clear. The beaches were as beautiful as the travel posters advertised, and palm trees lined the boulevards. We rented a car at the Miami airport and off we went to our motel at the north end of Miami Beach.

Kim and I immediately hit the beach and into the water. It was unbelievably warm and we were delighted. Kim was not quite six, and she loved the beaches and took to the water like a duck. Although she could not yet swim, what with her little inflated plastic doughnut, she was having the time of her life. Back in 1957 South Florida, in my opinion, was truly beautiful, a virtual tropical paradise, it seemed. It was still uncrowded, with large stretches of beaches along the east coast undeveloped and vacant, and wide stretches of open countryside between the small cities. U.S. Highway 1 was still merely a two-lane road. The Cubans, the Haitians and other mud races were still practically unknown. Tourists, of course, had been coming here for the last century, but the influx of permanent residents was still relatively small.

But even then, Florida already abounded in tourist attractions, and we now took every opportunity to cover the territory. We visited Parrot Jungle, Monkey Jungle, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, Viscaya, and the Cloisters of the Monastery of St. Bernard. We also took far ranging trips to Coral Gables, to Ft. Lauderdale and to Pompano Beach. Even then I had in the back of my mind - if we did move out here, which area would be most desirable?

During my several visits with the Hunter Fan Co. management in Memphis I had met a flamboyant young design artist who was on a retainer basis with both Robbins & Myers and Hunter Fan. His name was Shelton Rutter. He did product design and styling for their various merchandise and packaging. He was now involved in designing a plastic front cover for my second model of Canolectric, the unit that would be built into the wall. It was Shelton who had made our reservations for the motel in Miami Beach at the height of the season, something not easy to get. He had a wife and seven children, all of which lived in the city of Kendall in South Dade County.

We had made arrangements to all have dinner together, my family and his entire family. It so happened that after we had been enjoying the sights in and around Miami for about a week that Kim suddenly came down with the measles, just before we were to get together with the Rutter couple and their seven kids. Naturally, not wanting to transmit the measles to his brood of seven, I called him up to cancel the meeting. Shelton, being an excitable fellow, only allowed me to get as far as "my daughter has the measles", when he hit the ceiling, and the meeting was off before I could say another word.

The next day I had to leave for Memphis where I had a meeting scheduled with Frank Brady, the manager of Hunter Fan, and with several other executives. While there the Hunter company was also having one of their meetings in which all their salesmen gathered from different parts of the country. Shelton Rutter and I were invited to join them at some bash at a night club, at which, as I remember, Nelson Eddy, the great baritone singer, had a temporary engagement. During the 1930's I had seen Nelson Eddy in practically every movie he ever starred in - "Rose Marie", "Maytime", and many others, and I was a devoted fan of his and Jeanette MacDonald's. I was excitedly anticipating seeing him in person. When I did see him I felt let down. True, his singing was still great. However, the ribald jokes and chatter that went with it seemed to cheapen the whole preconceived image I had of him.

About five days later I was back in Miami Beach. Kim had stayed confined to the room in the motel, and had her food brought to her on the sly by a motel maid. The management did not want the word to get around that there was someone harbored in their motel that had the measles. Henrie had been giving Kim baths in the tub with large doses of Linnet Starch to help heal the rash. By the time I got back Kim was pretty well over the outbreak. We resumed our sightseeing and swimming in the ocean. One of the trips we took at this time was a pleasure cruise on one of the sightseeing boats in Biscayne Bay. I remember that during this cruise we were treated to viewing many of the fabulous mansions along the bay front and on its many man-made islands. The tour guide was describing them one by one and which millionaire lived in which mansion. I remember him telling about one in particular. This one, he said, is owned by the man who invented the pinking shears. He sold his patent to some big company, and, he emphasized, the man never worked another day in his life. I felt highly encouraged. If this individual could retire by inventing a gadget as simplistic as a pinking shear, why, surely, I could do even better with my push-button electric can opener.

The trip to Florida had an important bearing on our future course of events. It was at this time that I became enamored with boating, swimming pools, beaches, palm trees and the tropical life style in general. It had made a lasting impression on me, and I began thinking, why don't we live out here?

A few days after returning from Memphis, we flew back to San Francisco, to Hayward, and our home in Glenmore Gardens.

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Milestone Thirty: Playing in the Big Leagues

The permit for the original 100,000 share stock offering had an expiration date of February 28, 1957, beyond which date, if not sold out, no more shares could be sold. Before I had left for Florida I had my attorney prepare an application for an extension. Gene Rhodes' Junior law partner, M. O. Sabraw, was in charge of this application, a fairly routine procedure in which we did not anticipate any particular problems. The enthusiastic acclaim we had received from jobbers and wholesalers at the Chicago Housewares Show was most encouraging, and besides, we were now also coming out with a second unit that opened up a whole new market in the home builder trade, namely the built-in the wall unit. The prospects looked good.

After the Florida trip, when I came back to the office in early March, all hell broke loose. I asked my attorney, M. O. Sabraw, where is the renewal for the stock permit? He searched his files. It hadn't come yet. Why hadn't it? He searched his files some more. The application was still in his files. It had never gone out. He had forgotten to mail it out a month ago.

We were now in deep trouble. The boys at the brokerage firm, Stephenson Leydecker, had assumed that the permit extension had been approved. Nobody had told them any different. It happened that stock sales had been exceptionally good after the permit expired, and now all those sales were in violation of not only California law, but also what was worse, Federal law.

What to do?

We had to inform the California Commissioner of Corporations of our boo-boo, and the commission took a dim view of our error. We had to offer a refund to all those purchasers who had bought stock during the period the permit was invalid. This we did and about $6000.00 had to be refunded, and all sales were now suspended until we received a new permit. This was granted on March 26, and we were off and running again, and by the middle of April the remainder of the 100,000 shares were sold out. We were now able to take the funds out of escrow and utilize them for the operation of the company. I no longer had to loan my personal funds to keep the company afloat, but the company, in fact, could now repay me the $25,000 in loans I had been advancing it over the last two years. By this time we were getting a lot of good publicity in a number of trade journals and even the regular press - magazines and newspapers. We had a hot item and the business world was taking note. Sears, Roebuck was interested in negotiating an order for 10,000 units. I flew to Chicago and sat down with the purchasing agent. Yes, they were ready to buy. We haggled over price and deadlocked over a 50 cent per unit difference. The deal finally fell through.

Although the Sears deal didn't come off, the future looked bright, nevertheless, and we felt we had a big deal ahead of us, if we could put together enough money to properly promote it. At our March 25th board meeting we decided to apply for a larger stock offering, another 200,000 shares for a total of 300,000. Our underwriter, Stephenson, Leydecker & Co. in Oakland agreed to sell this offering on a best efforts basis (no guarantee), however, this time, Mr. Stephenson insisted we had to go first class all the way. We had to go through the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission, which would remove the restriction of selling to California residents only. We also had to get a big name public accounting firm to audit our books and issue its official financial statement. Furthermore, we had to get a large, well-known San Francisco law firm to put our stock offering circular together and present it to the Securities Exchange Commission. One more stipulation: we had to have the Bank of America National Trust to act as our transfer agent for the stock.

All of this was a big order and I had been warned before that once I went through a Securities Exchange application I would never want to do it again. I had this directly from the horse's mouth - the San Francisco attorneys.

However, at this time the outlook was bullish and I took the plunge. We retained the national firm of Ernst & Ernst, C.P.A.'s, out of San Francisco to audit our company and issue a financial statement. They sent one of their young C.P.A.'s down to our office, and he spent a whole week pawing through every file and letter in our office. Our bill for this gambit was $6000.00.

We retained the prestigious San Francisco law firm of Orrick, Dahlquist, Herrington and Sutcliffe of 405 Montgomery Street to put the Offering Circular together, and make the application to the Securities and Exchange Commission, who happened to have an office in San Francisco also. I found out from the lawyer in charge of our application that the S.E.C. does not give you a "permit" as does the California Corporation Commission, nor does it even "approve" your application. It only approves such application in a negative way by not denying it, provided it meets all its requirements. Orrick, Dahlquist also sent one of their lawyers down to our office to plow through our files for several days. Their fee for checking us out, for making the application and putting the Offering Circular together was $10,000.00. I still have copies of that expensive Offering Circular.

When we talk about sums such as $6000 for a financial statement from the CPA's, $10,000 in attorneys fees, we must remember that these were pretty hefty sums in those days, when a dollar would buy somewhere between eight to ten times what it will today.

Well, anyway by June 26, 1957, we had it all together and we were in business to sell another 200,000 shares.

At this point I want to digress and recall my recreational interest that was kindled at about this time. While in Florida I was enchanted with the tropical ways of life - the beaches, the oceans, the swimming pools, the palm trees, the pleasures of boating. Some time after we came back to California I happened to be reading a full page ad in the San Francisco Examiner about a major boat show that was to be held in the S.F. Cow Palace, and with my appetite now whetted for such things, I decided this was a must see. Seeing such a vast display of beautiful new boats really put me over the brink. I must have one, I decided. Where had I been all my life? I made a contact with one of the dealers, and a week later I was the proud owner of a 22-foot Owens cabin cruiser, powered by a 220-horse power motor. The new toy cost me $4400, but what the hell, I was delighted. I put it up in a berth at Alameda, and soon I was skimming along in San Francisco Bay. The San Francisco Bay waters are not the calmest for small boats. I remember one of the early outings on which I took my wife and six-year-old daughter Kim. It was the May Day Regatta when all the small boats were to assemble under the Golden Gate Bridge at a given hour (it was at noon, I believe.) As a new owner, I wanted to participate, of course. The waters were rough as usual, and they were even rougher as we approached the inlet itself. We didn't quite make it before we turned around, as my daughter became more and more terrified, in fact, she hunched up on top of the engine box, head down and covered her eyes. She says that is when she learned to pray.

However, we did have a lot of enjoyable cruises, and many a time I would take the boat out by myself, or take somebody like Cecil Boswell out for an afternoon of fishing. Finally, later on we decided to take the boat to calmer waters, and secure it in a berth in the Delta area, north of Oakland, an area where the Tuolumne and the Sacramento River come into confluence and form a conglomerate of lakes, bays and lagoons, islands and sand bars. We would sometimes drive up there for weekends and live in the cozy cabin quarters for several days at a time.

Getting back to business and the Canolectric, in the spring of 1957 we had taken several other steps forward in expanding and building up the company. On April 1 we moved into larger quarters. We rented a whole building with about five rooms at 22105 Meekland Avenue, Hayward. This building had previously been occupied by one of the departments of the City of Hayward, and came complete with a large steel walk-in vault. On April 23, I received final approval on the patent application filed more than a year earlier. We now had Patent No. 2,789,345, and the patent office had allowed every claim that we asked for - all nineteen of them, an unusual occurrence, my attorney proudly informed me. We could probably have obtained even more claims if we had asked for them, he added. We had also filed for a Canadian patent, which was later granted. We filed for a design patent for the styling of the plastic over. This design, by the way, had been done over a period of several months by a group of young design artists with very special talents. Their names Melvin H. Best, Robert S. Inlow, James M. Powell and William J. Ward, all living in and around the Los Angeles area, four hundred miles to the south of us. Their tab was $4,000.00. We also applied for registration of our trademark the name "Canolectric". This, too, was later approved. In this respect we ran into some opposition from a large established company by the name of Rival, that made a non-electric hand operated can opener called "Canomatic". They claimed we were infringing on their trademark, which seemed pretty far-fetched to me, in view of the fact their unit was neither automatic nor electric. After writing the president of the company and talking to him on the phone several times, they finally decided not to sue us.

There were several other major changes in our organizational set-up. Al Miller had resigned from our Board of Directors and he was replaced by Les Grant of Stephenson Leydecker. We also increased our sales staff by one, and soon thereafter reduced it by one Al Bierman. I had originally met Bierman and known of him when he worked for Al Miller of the Lanoglove company, who by now was struggling to keep his company afloat and could no longer afford to pay Berman. However, Miller had high praise for Bierman's promotional abilities. The story Bierman told about himself was that he had been part of a group of six, of which his cousin was the head honcho, that they had promoted a vitamin company into a multi-million dollar category. He loved to tell stories about the myriad of big deals they had pulled off, hundred thousand dollar contracts, about what high rollers they were and how they all traveled in the fast lane in high style. Al Miller believed all this, and on the basis of these stories was convinced that Bierman must be a great promoter.

Since we were now reaching the stage where the first 5000 units of Canolectrics would soon be arriving we were aggressively preoccupied organizing sales distribution with (a) a number of groups of sales reps all over the country for distribution to wholesalers and retailers, and (b) contacting most of the prestigious department stores directly. For this
I needed additional help. One day in the latter part of March a distinguished looking man walked into our office who was selling fleet car rentals for a large company. He was a big man, 6 foot, 2-1/2, handsome in a macho way, and seemed to have the necessary charisma to make a good sales representative. I asked him if he would like to work for my company. A week later he decided he would, and I hired him. His name was Jack Hainline.

Right from the beginning there seemed to be an antagonism, a rivalry, between Jack Hainline and Al Bierman. Jack suspected that Al was a phony, and took the trouble to check out Bierman's background. He came back to tell me that all these stories Bierman had been telling about his participation in the high flying vitamin company he loved to tell about were a pack of lies. The fact emerged that Bierman was merely a drifter, had from time to time been a car salesman, an insurance salesman, etc., but never with any amount of success. When I confronted Bierman with all this, he admitted he had lied flagrantly, and I let him go. Al Bierman resigned from the Board of Directors, and was soon replaced by a man of substantial means.

Louis F. Buran, who replaced Bierman on the board, was a multi-millionnaire and head of the Buran Equipment Co. which dealt in heavy road building equipment, with branches in Oakland, Santa Clara and Lost Angeles. He was a friend of Les Grant and had purchased 3500 shares of Klassen Enterprises.

By the beginning of May, 1957, the first shipments of our 5000-unit order of Canolectrics began arriving. I soon hired a second sales and promotion hand, a cocky little fellow by the name of John Pledger. As the summer progressed we were successful in setting up sales representatives through manufacturer's reps in the States of New York, New Jersey, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and most of the other Eastern states. We also had fair coverage in the State of California. For this we enlisted a pair of aggressive Irishmen by the names of Danny Dunn and Jim Karnes. They had established themselves as manufacturer's reps in the Los Angeles area, 712 So. Olive, to be exact. They were a flamboyant pair, and well versed in the small appliance field. Our sales by September amounted to $22,872; in October, $17,543; in November, $17,372; in December, $21,457. This was not great, in fact, disappointing, but then we were a struggling new company trying to put a new product on the market.

Throughout this sales period, I was having problems with my No. 1 sales manager, Jack Hainline. Although physically he gave a strong macho image, actually he had feet of clay. Whenever a crisis arose, instead of meeting it he would run away from it like a crybaby. Instead of selling the product as was, he would try to redesign it every other day, a useless pursuit. Finally I got tired of his habitual whining, and one day I sat him down and told him, "Jack, we have spent $50,000 cutting the dies to manufacture this appliance. We have had 5000 units manufactured and shipped to us. Now you go out and sell them or don't come back." But he kept on whining and kibitzing. Finally at the end of December I fired him. John Pledger and I went to the Chicago Housewares

Show again in January as guests of Robbins & Myers. We had a meeting of all our sales reps who were also there and tried to stir up their enthusiasm, but after the Christmas sales rush, our sales had fallen off dramatically, and it was not easy to regenerate the earlier optimism. I began to see the handwriting on the wall. We were running out of steam and we were running out of the money necessary to launch any further large promotions as we had done in the past. There were two factors working against us. One was the fact that there was a recession coming on in 1958, and a retrenchment of purchasing. Secondly, by now the larger companies were getting into the electric can opener market - General Electric, Sunbeam, Oster Mfg. Co., Nu-Tone, and a dozen others. True, they did not put out a push-button, fully automatic can opener as we did, but merely a cheaper unit at about half the price, a unit whereby the can was pierced by means of a manual lever. They also had a number of other advantages they had large, established sales forces, they had prestigious, well-known names, and they had large amounts of promotional resources. General Electric, for instance, could sell a quarter of a million units by just filling their sales pipelines of wholesalers, jobbers and retailers, before the first unit ever even reached the first retail customer. We were outclassed and outmaneuvered by the giants.

Robbins & Myers, and their subsidiary, Hunter Fan, had always wanted to manufacture our unit and sell it under their own name and on their own account, and in the past, had made a number of offers to that effect. By the spring of 1958, we seriously considered their offer. In fact, it seemed to me to be the only way out.

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Milestone Thirty: Playing in the Big Leagues

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Milestone Thirty-One: Hawaiian Holiday

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By the middle of May, 1958, I was pretty well convinced that we could no longer support a meaningful sales force, nor could we mount a massive advertising campaign. I had let John Pledger go before the end of March. The only option we now had open to us was to accept the offer Robbins & Myers presented to us, and that was to let them manufacture, promote and sell the can opener on their own account and pay us a per unit royalty. On this basis I signed a contract with them, and we, as a company now had very little to do except hope for the best and sit back and collect royalties. I had mixed feelings. I felt let down, and I also felt relieved. What should I do next? I had Florida on my mind. Why don't my family and I take a nice vacation and think it over? Why don't we all take a nice leisurely cruise to Hawaii, that tropical paradise?

No sooner said than done. I contacted my travel agent and made arrangements for a three-week cruise to, and tour of, that tropical paradise called Hawaii. We had never been there before.

On June 6, 1958, we embarked on the Lureline, the flagship of the Matson Steamship Lines, from out of San Francisco. There to see us off were Jean Feitner, my devoted secretary Louise Totaro, and Henrie's mother. It was a happy occasion. The weather was ideal, and we even popped the cork on a bottle of champagne. Coincidentally, it so happened that also on the same ship were our Presbyterian minister, Tom Fuhr, his wife Ruth, and their financial angel and traveling companion, Burton Williams. The cruise across the Pacific during the next five days proved to be the most enjoyable of any we have ever experienced in any of our many travels. Unlike my stormy crossing of the Atlantic three years earlier, the Pacific Ocean was most calm and pacific. The weather was sunny and warm, and became warmer each day as we approached nearer to Hawaii. In the dining room seating arrangement we had the good fortune to be seated with a congenial young couple our own age by the name of Bill and Evelyn Evatt, whose little daughter Julie happened to be just about the same age as Kim. The two of them hit it off immediately and were soon running loose and at random all over the ship.

The next day after we left San Francisco was Kim and Henrie's birthday, June 7. We had cake and candles at our table, and it was also the day Kim lost one of her front teeth. She had just turned seven.

The trip across the Pacific was a lot of fun and games. The ship's entertainment director gave lessons in how to dance the Hukkilau, a then popular dance in Hawaii, a sport in which all of us participated, including the preacher and his wife. One afternoon I tried my hand at skeet shooting off the deck at the stern of the ship. I should have stayed in bed. I had never tried it before, and trying to learn in front of an audience is neither the best time nor place, but it was an experience. The food aboard the ship was superb, and I fondly remember especially those delicious afternoon buffet lunches set out on the deck in the open. The long buffet tables were richly laden with all kinds of seafood cold shrimp, scallops, and all the lobster you could possibly eat.

Arriving at Hawaii was an event in itself. As the profiles of the islands hove into view, there was a certain mystique, a certain excitement in the air. As the ship temporarily anchored about a mile offshore from the harbor, official greeters came aboard, hula girls came aboard and hung leis about everyone's neck, and there was that jolly air of festivity on deck as if we were participating in some historic event.

We stayed at the old Moana Hotel. (Since then, a much larger modern structure has been added.) As we approached the entrance to the hotel, there appeared a tall slim hula girl and a photographer to take our pictures. While our rooms were being readied we sat at the tables under a huge banyan tree that was in back of the hotel, between it and the beach. We were served spiked Planters Punch, while we watched the breakers rolling in and listened to the sound of the ocean. It was all very Hawaiian.

That same afternoon we started out on the first of several tours of the island. One evening a few days later we went to a Hawaiian Luau, a feast that was being prepared before our very eyes on an uncrowded beach. (Beaches were still uncrowded in those days.) As we were all watching the cooks unravel the ti leaves from the barbecue pit in the ground and take out the roast pig, our little seven-year-old daughter piped up (during a particularly silent lull) "Aren't they going to wash that thing off before we eat?"

We took a number of island tours, and occasionally we would meet up again with the Evatts, who were with a different tour and stayed at a different hotel. We visited Pearl Harbor and had pointed out to us where the different ships had been sunk on that fateful day of December 7, 1941. We visited the Schofield Barracks and the Wheeler Air Force Base where so many of our planes had been bombed out of existence. We visited the pineapple fields, and we visited the Robert Louis Stevenson cottage. We drove into the middle of Diamond Head.

Henrie and I took a cruise on a catamaran out in the open waters and witnessed a pair of dolphins who were playing games with our boat. We also took a ride on an outrigger canoe in which the native oarsmen would paddle us far out into the surf, and then we would return on the back of a rolling breaker.

During this time Kim and I also spent a lot of time on the beach and in the surf, while Henrie stayed in the hotel. At this time also, for the first time in the last three years, I had time to relax, to think, and to philosophize. I read a book on the history of Hawaii, and I also read a book called "Many Lagoons", by Ralph Varady, which captured my fantasy. The latter is a story of a city office worker who finally wanted to get away from it all and did something about it. He left everything he was doing and transplanted to the distant Polynesian island of Moorea, about ten miles distant from Tahiti, where he became a beachcomber of sorts. The South Seas setting, the simple, languid life somehow intrigued me. I thought some more about moving to Florida, an idea I had come to Hawaii to try to resolve. I broached the subject to my wife. She was not too keen about it.

After we had fairly well done Honolulu and Oahu, we flew to the Big Island, Hawaii, by means of a small two-engine plane. We stayed at a little, one-story motel on the Kona Coast, a motel with louvered wooden doors and window shutters for ventilation. It had no air-conditioning, but had a nice big swimming pool, a big rotary spit and barbecue pit that could accommodate a whole beef. We were again served Planter's Punch when we arrived and the whole atmosphere was much more rural and informal than in and around the big city of Honolulu.

Our guide for the whole stay on the Big Island was a friendly fellow by the name of Norman, who boasted that he was a "pure blooded" Hawaiian, and that there were only very few of those around any more. After more than a hundred years of flagrant miscegenation on these islands, how anyone could be sure that they were "pure blooded" remains a mystery, but it made good conversation. Anyway, he strummed on his guitar, he had a beautiful voice as he sang "Beyond the Reef and other Hawaiian songs, and he was a likable fellow. He and Kim got along famously, and she remembers him with affection. He was also a good raconteur, and I especially remember him telling the story about how the Christian missionaries came to Hawaii a hundred or more years ago to proselytize the natives, and convert them to Christianity. While the Hawaiians were down on their knees and had their heads bowed down in prayer, he said, they found that when they looked up again, the missionaries had stolen their lands. There was more truth than poetry in that story, and at the time I sympathized with him. (But I don't now.)

We toured the Big Island for the next several days. Norman took us to the Kilauea crater, to the Black Sand Beach and to Paradise Falls. He took us to the ruins of the Village of Refuge. After several days we flew back to the Honolulu International Airport and from there flew back to San Francisco.

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Milestone Thirty-One: Hawaiian Holiday

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Milestone Thirty-Two: Reconnoitering Florida

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Before we left Hawaii, Henrie and I discussed the idea of moving to Florida some further, and although she wasn't too enthusiastic about it, she agreed that she would go along with it, if that's what I wanted to do, and thought best for our future. When we arrived back in California, I had definitely made up my mind that that is what we should do, and I immediately made arrangements to do so. The first step, I thought, was to make an in-depth reconnaissance trip and survey the territory. What I had in mind was to go back into real estate, since Florida was booming in rising real estate values, and prices at this time had not yet sky rocketed. What I wanted to do in the preliminary trip was to survey the business opportunities, check the different areas as to where we might want to live, and have a fairly meaningful assessment of the situation before we made the final move.

In the middle of July, two weeks after we got back from Hawaii, I took a flight out of Oakland Airport to Miami. I arrived there at approximately midnight, and as our plane circled in for a landing, I remember how clear the air was as I looked down on that vast panorama of lights. I also remember how hot and humid the air seemed when I stepped out of the plane onto the tarmac, compared to the cool temperatures I had left in Oakland. I checked in at a nearby airport motel for the night and called it a day. The next morning I rented a car and began driving north on Federal Highway, also known as U.S. 1, stopping
in at various real estate offices along the way. (Federal Highway at that time was merely a two-lane road, cutting through large segments of cow pastures and empty spaces.) During our previous trip to South Florida in the winter of 1957, I had already more or less discounted the Miami area as a place to settle, and targeted the Ft. Lauderdale and Pompano Beach area, but now that I was here, I wanted to see all of Florida, or at least the southern portion. One of the real estate offices I stopped in at for information during that first day was Tropical Acres, Inc., on U.S. 1 in Ft. Lauderdale, where I met a salesman by the name of Arnold Nordene, a blonde Swede, age 45. This office dealt mostly in acreages, the sector of real estate in which I was particularly interested.

What I had in mind was to find a piece of undeveloped acreage, possibly at the intersection of two major highways, and consider starting a town site, a development similar to what I had started in Nevada eight years earlier, which had proved to be highly rewarding financially. I studied the road map of Florida, and found a few such possibilities. Next I looked over the different cities which might be most desirable to live in, with the prime stipulation being that they had to be on the coast, either next to the gulf or next to the Atlantic, with canals and waterways. When in Florida, I wanted to indulge in boating! That, too, was a prime concern.

Going north, I looked at Hollywood, Ft. Lauderdale, Pompano Beach, Deerfield Beach, Boca Raton, Palm Beach, Jupiter, Fort Pierce and Vero Beach. From there I drove westward on Hwy. 60 and paid special attention to a development at the fork of Hwy. 60 and Hwy. 6, where a large new subdivision was being promoted. It represented something similar to what I had in mind. From there I went on to Tampa, St. Petersburg, and on down the West Coast to Naples, stopping in at various real estate offices along the way to inquire about properties, developments and prices. I also went back north to check in and around the Lake Okeechobee area.

Finally, I wound up back in Arnold Nordene's office in Ft. Lauderdale, and negotiated two contracts for the purchase of two pieces of property in Collier County. One was a forty acre piece lying west of Miami and having a quarter of a mile frontage along Tamlami Trail, and the other was a 640-acre section lying north of the trail. My conclusion was that the real estate business in Florida looked encouraging, and I had made a definite commitment to that effect by purchasing those two pieces of property. My other observation was that the Ft. Lauderdale - Pompano Beach area was probably the choicest area in which to settle down. What with the two purchase contracts in my pocket, I called it a day and flew back to Oakland.

My wife met me at the airport. While having a cup of coffee and a sandwich at the airport restaurant, I related to her a brief summary of my travels. At this time I also made an important decision. While we were having our cups of coffee, we were each smoking a cigarette. When I finished mine, I ground out the butt in an ash tray and said to her, 'This is the last cigarette I am ever smoking." That was 31 years ago. I have never smoked another cigarette since.

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Milestone Thirty-Three: Building a Home in Florida

When I arrived back from Florida it was the beginning of August. We wanted to be in time for the start of the school term and set September I as our target date to leave California. Since this did not leave us much time to make preparations, we lost no time in winding up our affairs and preparing to make the big move. I listed our home with a real estate agent in Glenmore Gardens with an asking price of $25,000. I advertised the several electric tools and equipment I had in my workshop, and luckily, managed to sell everything I did not want to take along. We were taking some of our furniture with us, and managed to sell the rest without too much difficulty cither.

I terminated the lease at the office of Klassen Enterprises for August the 15th, to an unhappy landlord, who grumbled about not giving him more notice. I called the last directors meeting and announced that I planned to move to Florida, that since there was nothing more to do now than collect royalties from Robbins & Myers, that I could do such just as easily from Florida as from Hayward. They, too, were unhappy about that, but there was nothing much they could do about it, and anyway, since the company was now in doldrums, it was no longer an issue of major importance. They all tendered their resignations. Having arranged for a moving van to pick up our furniture and belongings on the last day and having our suitcases packed (including Kiki, our cat, in a traveling cage) we drove ourselves to the San Francisco Airport. There a buyer I had made arrangements with picked up my car, and we in turn, boarded a plane and were off, cat and all.

It was not a through flight and we had to change planes in Dallas, after a several hour stopover. Meanwhile, Kiki and the baggage went a different route and a change of planes in Chicago. We all arrived in Miami airport at more or less the same time in the early afternoon of the next day. As always at this time of year, the weather was hot and humid, and we all arrived hot and tired as we collected our baggage. Poor Kiki, she was sprawled out flat as a pancake in the bottom of her cage, practically passed out from heat prostration and panting heavily. We took her out of her cage and gave her some water to drink and she soon revived. I rented a car and we drove north towards Ft. Lauderdale. Kim and Kiki were soon sound asleep in the back seat. On the way we ran into one of those sudden heavy downpours for which Florida is noted. Finally, we checked in at the Sherwood Motel on North Federal Highway in Ft. Lauderdale. Kim and I were immediately in the water, enjoying the pool and the Florida sunshine.

We stayed there for a week, meanwhile scouting the territory. Then we moved into an apartment located on Hwy. A1A and about a block from the beach. This apartment building, located in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, was run by a nice couple who went by the name of Englehardt. As soon as we had settled in we enrolled Kim in the nearest school. The school, called McNab Elementary School I believe, was located on the west side of Federal Highway, some distance away.

In the meantime, we started looking for a house to buy. Since I had moved to Florida with the idea of enjoying boating and swimming, this meant the house we were looking for would not only have to be on a canal, but it would also have to have a swimming pool. Furthermore, not just any canal would do. In order to do this boating bit properly and be able to accommodate any size motorboat or sail boat, the house had to be on a canal that had open passage to the Intercoastal Waterway. This meant at the very least that it had to be on the east side of Federal Highway, since this road had no opening bridges in the northern part of Ft. Lauderdale or Pompano Beach. We looked at a few dozen houses, but none of them seemed to have the right combination. Either the location was wrong or the arrangement was not to our liking. Finally we decided we would buy a lot and build our house to our own specifications.

We began looking at a number of lots and finally decided on a waterfront lot on 26th Street in Lighthouse Point, a new prestige development that was replete with wide canals and complete with coral rock seawalls. The whole area had formerly been a huge mangrove swamp, but now, after a lot of dirt had been dredged and moved, and miles of fancy seawalls built, it had all the makings of a real high-class prestigious water front community, which later in fact it did become.

We spent some time planning and sketching the layout of our new house, then took our sketches to a professional architect and had him draw up the blueprints. Essentially, the house was in the shape of a broad "H", with a 15' by 30' swimming pool in the lower part of the H. We had a 30-foot boat dock on the seawall for a future boat. The building was of CBS, concrete slab floor, and one story. It had a white tile roof, an enclosed two-car garage with an electric door opener. The house had three bathrooms, with a sunken bathtub for Kim. It had only two bedrooms, and a large den and library off to one wing. The total square footage was a little over 2200.

We paid $10,500 cash for the lot of our choice, a considerable amount in those days. While our plans were being drawn up we drove around the streets of Lighthouse Point more intensively, and finally Henrie saw a lot on the inside curve of a fat banana shaped island that constituted 31st Court. It had a wide, open view looking towards the tall lighthouse that later gave our city its name. (There were still only a few homes in this development and it was not incorporated at this time.) My wife insisted that she much preferred this lot to the one we had already bought. So we finally bought it for $12,000 cash, and now had two lots on our hands.

We had already lined up a contractor by the name of Paul Wackes, and as soon as we closed the deal on the newly purchased lot we were ready to start building. By now it was the first of November 1958.

In the meantime, several other things had happened. Our house back in Glenmore Gardens in California had been sold at the asking price and we received the proceeds there from (less the balance on the mortgage.) We had moved from our apartment in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea to a house on North 5th Avenue in Pompano Beach. We had put Kim in a private school called Palm Cove Beach School, which was located about a mile north of where we now stayed. I had rented a one-room office on the second floor of a building at 2605 East Atlantic Blvd., in Pompano Beach, in order to get started in the real estate business. For this I paid Seese Realty a rental of $65 a month. The van with our furniture and other belongings had arrived at the end of September and we had put the furniture into storage in a warehouse in Oakland Park.

By the first part of February 1959, our house was finished and we moved in. The first thing I did when I got up in the morning after the first night's sleep in the new house was to open the large sliding glass doors from our bedroom and jump into the pool for a swim. I felt like this was the Florida dream and we had now arrived.

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Milestone Thirty-Four: Travel, Business and Boating

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From the time the three of us arrived in Florida we felt that we now had a new world to explore, a sub-tropical world. It was a world of beaches, of islands and palm trees. There were The Keys, the islands of the Bahamas and the Caribbean, the Everglades and the sugar fields of the Lake Okeechobee area. There was Palm Beach and there was Cyprus Gardens. Soon after we arrived I turned in the rented car and bought a peach-colored Dodge station wagon, and when not house hunting we went exploring. The travels I am about to mention pertain mostly to the first few years.

We covered more territory during the first two years than any other period, although our travels never ceased. One of our favorite places to visit was to go down to the Keys, which at that time was an arduous drive from Lighthouse Point. There was no 1-95, no Sunshine Parkway, nor were there freeways of any kind. It was just a matter of hard city driving through the streets and traffic lights of Ft. Lauderdale, Hollywood, Miami, and what other cities lay in the way. Furthermore, Hwy. 1 through the Keys themselves was then still a narrow two-lane road, crossing over the numerous narrow bridges Henry Flagler had built for his railroad some sixty years earlier. After having explored Key West, one of our favorite places in the Keys was to go down to Islamorada and dine at the Chesapeake House. I can still remember the delicious Lobster Thermidor dinners we used to feast on for a mere $3.95. By the way, this atmospheric seafood place with all its seafaring relics and artifacts was completely gutted when in 1960 Hurricane Donna swept through that section of the Keys. It was inundated by huge waves and a swell of nine feet of water. A few people who were caught in the storm saved themselves by climbing up in its stone lighthouse tower that was, and still is, its particular landmark. However, Chesapeake House was rebuilt and refurbished by new owners soon thereafter, but it was never quite the same. In the South Miami area we visited such places of interest as the Coral Castle, Crandon Park Zoo, Monkey Jungle, Parrot Jungle, The Seaquarium, the Serpentarium, the Viscaya/Dade County Art Museum and the Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

Our favorite vacation spot in northern Florida was the old and historic city of St. Augustine. It lays claim to being the oldest city in the United States, although this claim is sometimes disputed by Santa Fe, New Mexico. St. Augustine does have a lot of history to show for itself, of which the old Spanish fortress of Castillo de San Marcos is the most outstanding. However, it also has a number of other, more recent tourist attractions of note. There is the Ripley Museum ("Believe it or not"), there is Potter's Wax Museum, there is the Zorayda Castle, there is the Old School House Restored area, all a mixture of the old and not so old, but all interesting.

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During the summer of 1959, the three of us took a two-week excursion to Mexico. Taking off from Miami by Aeromexicana, an airline that is no longer in existence, we flew into Mexico City. The flight itself, as I recall, was a memorable experience, because I still remember the delicious dinner that was served, and the fine wine that went with it. Landing in Mexico City, we took a taxi to the Reforma Plaza Hotel, one of the better ones. Kim was eight years old at the time.

We took several different tours of the city itself. Of particular interest were our visits to the central square, called the Zocalo, or Plaza de la Constitution. Located around this square are several of Mexico's most historic and monumental buildings. There is the great Cathedral on the north side, built between 1573 and 1667. On the east side is the National Palace, once the residence of its earlier Spanish viceroys. It is now highly decorated by the murals of communist leaning Diego Rivera, who in his murals tried to glorify the native Indians and the half-breeds, and at the same time to denigrate the Spanish conquistadors, and especially the conqueror of Mexico, Hernando Cortes. We also visited the then beautiful gardens and canals of Xochimlico and enjoyed the boat ride and the flowers. (Visits to these same gardens in later years made them appear like overcrowded garbage dumps.) We took a tour to the Shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and noticed its ancient walls were cracking, but were flimsily held together by steel cables. Also highly interesting were the huge crowds that milled about, most of them poor and deluded peasants, who, driven by their superstitions, had crawled to this shrine on their lacerated and bleeding knees. Some had come in this miserable condition for many days and many miles.

We also visited Chapultepec Castle, which was the scene of a violent battle when General Winfield Scott captured the city in 1847. The castle was further enhanced by the brief presence of Emperor Maximilian and his wife Carlota. They landscaped and beautified its location and added much to its romantic and historical lore. We visited the colorful University of Mexico, highly decorated and covered in mosaic imagery. We stepped back into the ancient history of Mexico in visiting the not too distant Pyramids of Toltec at Teotihuacan.

One of the most memorable events was our visit to a bullfight in the famous Plaza de Toros. The place was packed and as the first bull was brought out, the crowd went wild. None of the three of us had ever seen a bull fight before, and, I must admit, when the Toreador plunged that long sword in between the shoulder blades of the brave bull, I had a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. Kim, always an animal lover, cried. However, after the first bull, we became immunized to the slaughter and joined in the clamor with the rest of the paisanos.

While in Mexico City Kim temporarily came down with a virus, Montezuma's revenge, I think. One of the bellboys, a young fellow by the name of Carlos, was especially concerned and took good care for her.

After we left the capital, we motored to the beautiful and ancient silver mining town of Taxco. We stayed at the top of the mountain in a picturesque little hotel by the name of Victoria. It was a restful and artistic place to relax. I have often thought of it as a place to get away from it all, at least the way it was 30 years ago. Undoubtedly, by now it is no longer the way it was, and is probably overrun by tourists and peddlers hawking their sundry wares.

We visited a few other places, such as Puebla and Cuernavaca, then flew back to Miami. The most significant observation that I came away with was that practically all the outstanding buildings, cathedrals, monuments or pyramids had either been built during the ancient times, or during the Spanish rule before the revolution of 1810. Nothing much of interest had been built by the Mexican mestizos after that period, except, some of the modern hotels and skyscrapers, and even these, of course, were mostly all built by American capital and/or entrepreneurs.

Of particular interest to us were the Bahamas and the nearby Caribbean Islands. One of the first islands we flew over to was New Providence, whose capital, Nassau, is the largest city in the Bahamas, and also the capital of the British West Indies. When in Nassau we usually stayed at the old British Colonial Hotel, which is built of solid poured concrete and has withstood many a hurricane.

Another favorite vacation spot was Jamaica. At first we visited its capital, Kingston, where we stayed at the Myrtle Bank Hotel, but on succeeding trips we preferred to stay at the picturesque Tower Isle Hotel situated on the north shore of the island. There was a tiny island about half a mile offshore that sheltered the fine beach next to the hotel, and on this little island stood an old look-out tower, built of stone by the British some two hundred years ago. I will never forget the delicious buffet dinner we had out on the large stone patio of this hotel. It was a beautiful night, a full moon was shining and the tables were laden with boiled cold lobster. What more can you ask?

We also made several flights out of Palm Beach to the West End of the Grand Bahama Island. We took one trip to the American Virgin Islands, at which time we stayed at Charlotte Amalie on the island of St. Thomas. The mountains, the view of the harbor from our hotel and the flowers and the bougainvillea were all very picturesque and beautiful, but the people were not. We also visited the towns of Christiansted and Frederiksted on the nearby island of St. Croix. Somehow, because of its Dutch and Danish origins I expected to see some fine houses and businesses there, but I was very much disappointed. Like St. Thomas, it was overrun by blacks and coloreds, and everything was very much run down and looked like an ongoing slum, even more so than St. Thomas.

On one Easter vacation we took a seven-day tour of several Caribbean islands on a cruise ship out of Miami harbor. We sailed by a number of picturesque islands and dropped anchor and stopped in at a few. One of the most beautiful harbors we stopped in and docked at was Port Antonio on the north shore of the island of Jamaica. The harbor was a perfect horseshoe shape, with an island lying in the opening of the horseshoe so that the harbor had two entrances. The harbor was used as a shipping dock for the export of bananas by the United Fruit Co. Also inside the harbor at the shoreline was a bar and restaurant, known as Flynn's Inn, named after the late Errol Flynn, who used to spend all winter there. At one time he owned the bar and also the Tichfield Motel that was located up the hill from it. We enjoyed a good dinner in the dining room of the motel. Another island we visited was Hispaniola. We spent a day anchored offshore at Port au-Prince, Haiti. The moment we arrived we were greeted by a flotilla of small rowboats, with the natives hawking their assortment of wares to the American tourists. The scene reminded me much of when my family and I first arrived in Havana harbor from Europe back in 1924. The tourists all lined the rail, and while the natives below were hawking, the tourists above were gawking. Soon a number of natives had climbed aboard our ship with ropes which were tied to baskets. These baskets then acted as conveyor belts to transfer the merchandise upward, and the money downward. The bargaining was done by shouting up and down. Available were all kinds of goodies flowers, bananas, pineapples, oranges, woodcarvings, spears, native paintings, and a plethora of other items. We soon got into the fray, and bought a number of useless souvenirs, among them a pair of maracas for Kim, and a big (three foot) black wooden carving of some voodoo icon. As I remember, this wooden statue a few years later became badly worm eaten and had to be thrown away.

Since this backward country docs not (or at least did not then) have any decent docking facilities for large cruise ships, we were transported ashore by means of small tenders, as soon as we had concluded our rail side bargaining. Those of us who bought the extra excursion tickets were then loaded into private taxis and given a tour of the city and also of the island. The scenes in the city of Port au-Prince were almost unbelievable. As we drove very slowly through the Iron Market district, we were besieged by hordes of hungry, filthy, poverty-stricken people. Some were again hawking some trinkets or some other item, but most of them were just plain panhandling and begging, and I might add that they had this art of panhandling down to a science. Any time our car stopped and we just so much as rolled down a window for fresh air, immediately a number of black hands would be thrust through the open window, begging for a handout. I will never forget a small boy who was leading his little blind sister around by the hand. He was doing much better than his competitors.

Our taxi driver then took us northward across country and across the mountains to Cap Haitlen, where we saw the remarkable mountain fortress of La Citadelle Laferriere. It was built high up on the mountainside of the north shore in the early 1800's with black slave labor by the tyrannical mulatto "Emperor" Henri Christophe. (For more background history on Haiti, read my description in the White Man's Bible, C.C. No. 30, "The Grisly Lesson of San Domingo.")

Meanwhile, our sojourn in Florida was by no means all fun and games. I had come to Florida to get back in the real estate business, and starting in on a new business in a new location is never easy. As Bill Simon, the owner of the hardware in Lighthouse Point once jokingly told me, "I'll never forget that first year when we opened the hardware. Try as I may, I'll never forget it." As I have already stated previously, soon after we arrived in Florida I rented a one-room office at 2605 East Atlantic Blvd. I used this as my base for operations both for what files and records I still had for Klassen Enterprises, and also for the fledgling real estate business. I had already bought two large pieces of acreage before, during my scouting trip to Florida in July of 1958, and I now subdivided these into smaller acreages and began selling these on small down and small monthly payments. Within less than a year I bought another section, and from time to time, another and another. By February of 1961, things were going fairly well, and I moved into a larger two room office which I rented from Walcott, Inc. It was located about a block east of my first office and its address was 2741 E. Atlantic Blvd. My rent now was $100 per month.

Located a few blocks west on Atlantic Blvd. was the office of Kidder, Peabody & Co. During the first year, even before I opened my own office, I used to drop in and follow the stock market, buying and selling several issues. During this time I made money on some, lost on others. The net result, however, was a small loss, and I soon learned my lesson, namely, playing the stock market was a sucker's game, and I soon got out of it and stuck to real estate.

In the meantime, I was still involved in Canolectric and Klassen Enterprises, and Hunter Fan was still sending me royalty checks from Memphis each month. Although they were now selling both the built-in model and the on the wall model, sales were only mediocre. After being absent from California for a year the stockholders were beginning to grumble and wanted to know what was going on, despite the fact that I had mailed out financial reports from time to time. So in September of 1959 I flew back to California and called a stockholder's meeting in the boardroom of one of the big banks in Oakland. Flanked by my attorney, Gene Rhodes, and by Les Grant, of Stephenson Leydecker, I told them the whole story over again, a story of which they had already been informed by previous reports I had mailed. I told them we had done our level best to aggressively sell and distribute the Canolectric as long as we were able. When it became a losing proposition, we signed a licensing agreement with Robbins & Myers to produce and sell the can opener on a royalty basis. Robbins & Myers were now selling it under their own trademark and also making their best efforts, and I quoted statistics on the amounts of their sales, something I had also already done in my previous reports. After everyone had voiced their gripes and opinions, we elected a new board of directors. I still remained president, and I flew back to Florida. Hunter Fan continued manufacturing and selling the Canolectrics for another three years, selling a total of approximately 50,000 units, then in 1962 discontinued the operation. When they did, we dissolved the company and dispersed the cash on hand, which amounted to about $8,000, to the stockholders. And so ended the episode of the Klassen Pushbutton Electric Can Opener, also known as Canolectric.

* * * * *

Now to get back to the good part of the story, namely my involvement In boating, one of the main reasons as to why I wanted to move to Florida. When I left California, my 22 foot Owens was left behind, tied up in a yacht basin in the Delta area near Benicia. I had listed it with a broker in Oakland, the same yacht broker that had originally sold it to me. A few months after we made the move to Florida, he did in fact sell it and sent me a check for $4,000, only a little less than I had paid for it new. (Prices on the new model had gone up in the meantime.) Soon thereafter I bought another Owens, a 25-foot cabin cruiser, from a neighbor who lived at the end of our canal. I named the boat Kim Anita after my daughter, and we were all back into boating. Now in Florida, I did not have to dock it in some distant yacht basin, but could tie it up at my own 30-foot dock, right in my own back yard.

This 25 footer had a wooden hull. It had a nice comfortable forward bunk, a dinette that could be converted into another bunk, a sink and an alcohol stove, and a head. For the three of us, it had enough room to nicely accommodate us for cruising and for living on board. It had a single, inboard motor. We took it up and down the Intercoastal, all the way from Miami to Palm Beach. We took it out in the ocean. We went on extended cruises and lived aboard.

Almost from the beginning, (May 19, 1959) I joined the Pompano Beach Power Squadron and enjoyed the camaraderie of the boating crowd, which in that area was extensive. This group gave classes in boat handling, in navigation and in other aspects of maritime technology. They had meetings on a weekly basis and every so often organized group cruises. We also had parties and social events every so often. From the beginning I was interested in the educational classes it offered, which were basically spread over a period of years, and a certificate issued as each yearly class was completed. I immediately enrolled in the beginning class, which was Seamanship. After completing the first year, I enrolled in Advanced Pilot the second year, then in Junior Navigator the third year, but did not finish that class.

After having a lot of fun with the Owens for about two years, it began to develop dry rot in its wood structure, and I decided to get rid of it. I next bought a fiberglass boat, a 13 foot Boston Whaler, with an outboard motor. It was excellent for water skiing, something in which Kim and I had become much interested. We had a lot of fun with it, not only water skiing, but also going out to a reef in the ocean that was about a quarter of a mile offshore from the Hillsborough Lighthouse and Inlet. Here we would toss out a small Danforth anchor, wade around in the shallow water and pick up coral and species of sea life.

The next boat I bought was a 23-foot fiberglass Seabird with and inboard-outboard motor and drive. It was a cabin cruiser of sorts, being limited to a forward bunk for sleeping quarters, but it was speedy and small enough we could use it for water skiing. It was also an excellent cruising boat and soon the three of us took an extended cruise down to the Keys in it, a round trip that encompassed several hundred miles. One of the places we tied up for several days was Plantation Harbor in Plantation Key, which had cabins, a restaurant and a sheltered harbor. This was probably one of the finest cruises we ever enjoyed, as we went exploring among the smaller keys, the bird rookeries and all the beautiful blue-green waters.

Poor Seabird! In the summer of 1964 we were hit by Cleo, one of the few, but the most devastating of the hurricanes we experienced in our 25 years of sojourn in Florida. Our Seabird was tied up at our dock in the canal bordering our back yard. All the windows of our house had been shuttered in with aluminum panels except for the small window looking out of the kitchen towards the canal. As I looked out of that window that early September morn, the winds were howling furiously, and I could see some huge waves rolling westward down our canal. The Seabird was bobbing up and down like a cork and taking a tremendous pounding. Soon the bowline broke loose, but the stern line held and wedged the boat out at right angles to the dock, a position it undoubtedly could not long maintain. Kim and I ran out into the hurricane winds and tried to bring the boat back alongside the dock, or at least tie it up to the extent it would not break loose altogether. The best we could was to keep it from breaking away, but it took a severe pounding of its hull against the rough coral rocks of the seawall before it was all over. At least it did not sink, and a few days later I was able to drive it down the Intercoastal to a marine harbor where I had the fiberglass hull repaired at a cost of over a thousand dollars. Some other boats did not fare as well during that hurricane. Many were sunk. Some were cast adrift. One large cabin cruiser ended up in the middle of Federal Highway in Pompano Beach.

At the instigation of my friend, John Seeley, who lived one canal north of us, I joined a group of six, to jointly own and operate a larger cabin cruiser. John was a stockbroker, another fellow was an accountant, and another was a doctor. Anyway, the six of us first formed a corporation known as "Deep Six, Inc." We then bought a 36 foot Pacemaker cabin cruiser, that had two 280 H.P. General Motors engines, ample room for sleeping six, a refrigerator, a generator, a shower with hot water, and even air conditioning. We had fixed schedules for priorities as to who could use it when, but of course, we could always trade around. Outside of a few short cruises up and down the Intercoastal, my family and I never really used it much except for one grand cruise we took to the Keys in 1965. With us went Kim's friend, Mardee Martin. Both girls were 14 at the time, and they had more fun than a barrel of monkeys, as did we all. We first docked at Ocean Reef, an exclusive yacht basin on the Atlantic side of the north end of Key Largo, a place where Herbert Hoover did much of his fishing in his later years. After staying there about a week, we cruised on down to Islamorada and docked in Chesapeake Harbor, where also was located our favorite eating place, the Chesapeake House. After a few days there we leisurely cruised back up along the Keys in the open Atlantic, then into Biscayne Bay, tying up in a harbor somewhere in Miami overnight, then up the Intercoastal, and back home, everybody having had a fine time. That was the last cruise we took on the Deep Six. About six months later we Jointly decided to sell her. This we did, and split the proceeds. By 1967 I also sold the Seabird and that was the last boat I ever owned, although not the end of my boating. From time to time I would rent a boat and we would take a cruise to the Keys, or even to Lake Okeechobee, which Austin Davis and I did at one time. However, after ten years my interest in boating waned, and
I became involved in more serious endeavors.

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Milestone Thirty-Four: Travel, Business and Boating

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Milestone Thirty-Five: Philosophical Reflections put in Writing

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By the middle of 1960 I reached a stage in my life where I began to ask myself some serious questions about the very meaning of life itself. I began to drift into a sort of depressive state of mind that was, undoubtedly, thoroughly pessimistic. I began to wonder - what was the purpose of it all? Undoubtedly, I was not the first to raise such questions, men had been wondering about the meaning of life for thousands of years, but to me it was a unique experience, one that came not from some outside prompting, but something which at this stage of life came from within. I began asking myself such questions as: Why am I doing what I am doing? Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? Is there any purpose to it all? Not finding any answer, it depressed me.

Why I should fall into such a state of mind at that particular time, I cannot explain. Here I was, 42 years old, in good health, and at this point had not suffered any serious setbacks. We were living in Florida, an area of my choice, we had a nice, comfortable house, a swimming pool, a boat tied up at the dock in our back yard. My business was not doing great, but it was building up and progressing satisfactorily. We were neither broke nor hard pressed for money. In fact, I could hardly think of a time when we were in a better situation. Yet, I felt that I had reached a watershed in my life, that something was missing, that I should have some answers as to what it was all about, and lacking such answers, I had the uneasy feeling that probably there were no answers to the questions that were perturbing me.

Finally, I began to put down on paper my random thoughts and reflections. The first of these was dated December 20, 1960, and as time went on, sporadically I wrote more and more of these philosophical treatises. Most of them were of a negative, anti-religious nature, analyzing all the inequities and stupidities of humanity. By and large, they were, in fact, downright pessimistic and mostly pointless. I had my secretary type them out on yellow sheets, and put a date on each. My first secretary was an older gal with strong Catholic leanings, and as she typed my material she looked at me with a quizzical eye. One day she asked me, why did I write such stuff? Obviously, she concluded, I just wanted to get it all out of my system. Anyway, as more and more subjects began floating through my mind, I began putting them together in a loose-leaf ring binder, and finally, I began to think about writing a book. To give the reader some idea as to what my "stuff" was all about, it so happens I still have that loose-leaf binder today so that I can refer to it. I made up a list of suggested titles I might use as a title for the book. By quoting them verbatim I might give the reader some indication of my state of mind at the time. Here are the suggested titles:

Rat Race to Oblivion
Brushing Aside the Cobwebs
Humanity without Purpose
Perpetuity without Purpose
Adrift without Destination
Pointlessness in Perpetuity
Round and Round - but Why?
Who Started It All?
Reality vs. Dreamworld
A Look Outside the Dreamworld
A Look at Reality
The Dizzy Road to Nowhere
To Be or Not to Be
(On the) Treadmill to Oblivion

My final choice was the first one, "Rat Race to Oblivion". Since all this might sound somewhat depressive, let me make it clear that my mood of the time did not in any way hamper my vigor or interfere with my activities. I still eagerly pursued my participation in the Pompano Beach Power Squadron; I continued to build up my business with the usual drive; we still took any number of trips as usual (including a major tour to Europe, which I will describe later.) It is just that these questions kept plaguing me, and it was not only that I could find no answer to them, but even more so. It seemed to me that no one else over the centuries had come up with any satisfactory answers either.

However, looking back on it now, I have come to the conclusion that this particular period was not exactly wasted. I now see it as an incubation period, a span in my life when I correctly analyzed many of the ills of humanity, but was not yet far enough advanced to come up with some constructive answers and conclusions. This had to wait another eight or ten years when I began to look to the laws of nature for answers, rather than in some theoretical philosophical dissertation concocted by some previous philosopher. Had it not been for that inward examination and probing I would probably never have been able to advance to the next stage of development where I could have arrived at the positive, constructive ideas set forth in the Creativity ideology some ten years later.

In any event, I kept on writing analyses and conclusions about the vagaries and idiocies of the human population until I filled a whole loose-leaf binder. The last article I wrote was dated October 16, 1963. In the meantime, somewhere along the line I read a book entitled "Philosopher s Quest", by Irwin Edman, some Jew, perhaps. It was not a great book but in one chapter it told of another human being who was concerned about some similar questions, and like myself, never came up with any answers. He finally resolved his dilemma by forgetting the whole thing, and entering into the hedonistic mainstream of life with the attitude of Que Sera, Sera, what ever will be will be. Finally, I drifted into the same attitude myself. To hell with it all! Forget about trying to solve all the problems of the world. Enjoy life and let Nature take its course. I pursued a more irresponsible and hedonistic course. But the ensuing and deteriorating events of history still kept nagging at me more and more, and would not let me rest in peace.

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Milestone Thirty-Six: European Tour: Six Weeks and Eleven Countries

By 1962 my real estate business was coming along relatively well to the point where I felt we could enjoy some of the fruits of my labor. I had installed a fairly reliable secretary by the name of Helen Metzger, whom I felt I could trust with the day-to-day bookkeeping and the installment payments that were coming in, so that I could take some time off. My wife had never been to Europe before, and we concluded It was now time we both took an extensive trip to see the Old World and the roots of our heritage.

We decided to leave Kim home on this trip and take her on such a trip at a later time when she was a little older and could appreciate such a tour to better advantage. We bought her an airline ticket and sent her to stay with her grandmother, who lived in Shatter, California. In order to fly there she had to change planes in Los Angeles, then fly to Bakersfield, a rather risky venture about which we had some qualms at the time, and even more afterwards. After all, she was only eleven. However, she arrived safely, and after we had checked with grandma, we were ready to take off.

On Sunday, June 17, 1962, our neighbors from across the street, Ralph and Evelyn Dixon, drove us to the Ft. Lauderdale airport through a pouring rain and at 1:05 PM we took off in an Eastern Airlines Jet, Flight No. 820. Once airborne and above the clouds at 33,000 feet, we soon slipped into the holiday mood. The rain and the hustle and bustle were now behind us and everything was bright sunshine and smooth sailing as we flew over the water towards the Big Apple.

Henrie took notes on the entire trip (except the last day or two) and I am going to let her tell it from her notes from here on out. Here is what Henrie wrote:

NEW YORK. We landed at Idlewild Airport and took a cab to the Taft Hotel in Manhattan. What a skyline! Was smoky - looked like the Los Angeles smog. For me to see all those skyscrapers for the first time was indeed a thrill. We passed the site of the next World's Fair (1964-65) that they are already working on. The trees in New York are lovely and everything is so green. We passed an old cemetery - never have I seen so many tall gravestones so close together. As we crossed a bridge (one of so many, I lost track of which was which) we saw thousands of Puerto Ricans walking across the same bridge going to some festival on Randall Island.

What a thrill to drive downtown and look at all those tall buildings! After getting to the Taft Hotel we changed clothes and walked one block to the Time & Life Building. We took an elevator to the 48th floor and had a most marvelous six or seven-course dinner at the Tower Suite Restaurant. It was one of the most delectable meals I've ever eaten - and such beautiful service - mm-mm. After dinner, since no Broadway shows played on Sunday, we went to the Radio City Music Hall and saw a movie, "That Touch of Mink." It was an excellent comedy, and it was followed by a live stage show, the famous Rockettes. They were terrific.

Monday, June 18. The first thing we did was to go to the top (102nd floor) of the Empire State Building. Unfortunately, It was so smoky we couldn't at all see well. We could barely see the dim outline of the Statue of Liberty in the distance. We dashed into Gimbals Dept. Store for a brief look, after which we took a taxi to Wall Street and a look at the Stock Exchange. It was very interesting to watch all the frenzied trading that was going on. We next went to the United Nations building, where a number of tours were being conducted. We felt we didn't have time for a full tour so we settled for a lunch in their basement restaurant. From there we went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art on the edge of Central Park. What a huge and magnificent museum! We crossed over to the other side of the park to see the Museum of Natural History, a memorial to President Theodore Roosevelt.

By this time I was tired and footsore. We went back to the hotel and slept for an hour. After the brief rest we had dinner in the hotel dining room and listened to the lovely dinner music of Vincent Lopez.

It was now time to leave for the airport and board the plane for London. We were half an hour late getting away from the hotel and we just barely caught our flight with only three minutes to spare. They had already assigned our seats to someone else, but we managed to retrieve them. Whew! That was close! Too close! Anyway, we are airborne and left the international airport at 8:45 PM, and we will be in London in about six hours, which will be 7:30 AM their time. It is fairly dark and we watched a beautiful full moon rising through the clouds.

It is now 11:00 PM, New York time. We have just finished a most delectable dinner on the plane, the second of the evening. We had cocktails before dinner and a small bottle of red French wine with the dinner, so we are literally "flying high!" What a delightful trip! In 3-1/2 hours we will be in London. What a beautiful night! It is 11:30. I'm getting sleepy. Good night!

ENGLAND. Tuesday, June 19. I dozed off and woke up at 1:30, according to my watch, and it was daylight. One hour later we landed in London. We had gained five hours and it was now 7:30 AM, London time. England looked very beautiful and green from the air. The flowers, especially the roses, are some of the largest and loveliest I've ever seen.

We landed at a large and extremely modern airport. After going through customs, we went to a bank and exchanged some currency for British pounds. We then took a bus to the City Terminal in London, where we were met by a Swan Tour representative. He took us to the Strand Palace Hotel, where we checked in.

After a hot bath, we climbed into bed and slept until about 3 PM, getting a much-needed rest after a hectic day and considerable jet lag. After getting dressed we sampled English tea, a very enjoyable custom. We left the hotel and strolled across Waterloo Bridge to look at the Big Ben clock tower. Ben had a picture of himself taken in front of the tower - he called it a picture of Big Ben and little Ben. We also took pictures of the beautiful Parliament buildings on the River Thames, and of Westminster Abbey.

The English men as a rule are very smartly dressed. They carry an umbrella under their arm and wear a neat homburg. The women, on the other hand, gave an appearance of being generally somewhat unkempt.

Personally - I think their hair is a mess. Nearly everyone has a beautiful complexion - a white skin and rosy cheeks. They all seem to be great walkers or bike riders. They don't just leisurely stroll along, either, they really stride. We ourselves must have walked miles, and finally got back to the hotel. The weather was cool, windy and drizzly. Back at the Strand Hotel we had a good dinner with wine in the Exeter Room. Our waiter was a Greek. We had some sort of hard meringue for dessert. When I went to cut a piece of it with my fork it went off into "orbit", as Ben said, and flew across the room. I finally got the knack of how to handle it with a large fork and spoon.

Wednesday, June 20. We went on a city tour and first of all we visited the Tower of London and saw the Crown Jewels. Wow! Such diamonds! The weather was chilly and rainy. We took a tour through Westminster Abbey where many of the famous Britishers are buried. It was exciting to witness all this history. We drove down "The Mall" to Buckingham Palace. There were beautiful parks on both sides - St. James Park, loaded with flowers, and Green Park, which had no flowers. The knights of old used to joust in this park, with the ladies watching, we were told. We next drove down Bond Street and Regent Street, which are some of London's finest shopping areas. We then drove on and saw Downing Street, St. Paul's Cathedral and White Hall, with the Horse Guards sheltered in the archways of the latter. There are many lovely archways in the city, and everything is in either gray or black stone, old, old and older.

In the residential areas the houses looked exactly alike in each section. They had tiny little front yards with beautiful roses and an abundance of flowers.

Thursday, June 21. We went to the National Art Gallery at Trafalgar Square and saw a most magnificent collection of Old Masters. This was to be our last night in London and we wanted to make the most of it. We went to the Drury Lane Theatre and saw "My Fair Lady", a memorable event, with an excellent cast. We thoroughly enjoyed the play. We happened to sit next to a couple from Pomona, California and exchanged American impressions of English London.

Friday, June 22. We started the day by taking a taxi to Buckingham Palace to watch the old, time-honored English event called "The Changing of the Guard." When we got there some snappy-looking retired old English Colonel seemed to take a special interest in us. He took us under his wing and rushed us off to St. James Court to get the best and closest view of the changing of the guard. Ben took a whole roll of movie film of the event. Although the Colonel was probably in his seventies, he could certainly walk fast. I had to run to keep up with him. He took us on all the shortcuts from which we could get the best shots, all the while relating an endless review of ancient English history. It was all very interesting, but I got lost in all the dates and kings. When it was all over, we said, thank you! thank you! How can we ever thank you for being so nice to us? Well, he said In clipped British accents, you could start by leaving me a nice tip. We were somewhat surprised, since after all, we hadn't asked him to guide us around. He had approached us and volunteered. But no matter. We took the broad hint and gladly tipped him. He was well worth it. We had a good lunch at Lyon's Corner House at Trafalgar Square, after which we rushed back to the National Gallery for another quick look. We bought some prints there of some of the more outstanding paintings and had them shipped home. We viewed the statue of Erotica and the Piccadilly Circus. Trafalgar Square is beautiful with the towering Statue of Nelson, the lovely fountains and the hundreds of pigeons.

The food in London was excellent, the coffee was very strong, and was best diluted with hot milk. All over London there are flower boxes at the windows, a reminder of the Coronation, we were told.

And so we left dear old London at 5:00 PM on a bus with our tour group. Our tour guide was a 33-year-old German fellow by the name of Heinz Biedermann. We drove through the lovely English countryside to the town of Harwich, 90 miles away, our port of embarkation for crossing the English Channel. The grain fields were so green, the flowers so bright, and always, so many fine trees. We also saw a lot of cattle and sheep, and some horses. There were any number of thatched-roof houses along the way, all very picturesque. The tour stopped at the Red Lyon Inn, a typical English pub, for refreshments and a "rest stop." The latter turned out to be just a plain old "outside privy", not very accommodating for us American gals.

We arrived at Harwich at about 8:30 PM to board the SS Amsterdam to cross the English Channel for the Hook of Holland. We had to present our boarding passes and our passports, and took what few things we needed for the night from our luggage and put it In our tote bags, since our main luggage would not be available to us until the next night. After our cabins had been assigned to us we all had dinner on board. After a long day, this included wine and some good soup. We set sail at about 10 PM. We stood out on the deck for a while and watched the waters of the English Channel. I had expected the waters to be rough, but it was the smoothest boat ride I have ever experienced. Finally, at about midnight we went to bed, with an early awakening scheduled for the morning.

HOLLAND. Saturday, June 23. A busy day was ahead of us. We got up at 5:45, dressed and were ready to go ashore at the appointed time of 6:30 AM. We again showed our passports and then the whole tour of 44 marched off to the railroad station dining room to have breakfast. We sat at long tables, where our breakfast of excellent breads (several kinds), butter, plates of thinly sliced cheese and thin slices of ham were served. It was all very good, including the coffee, which we could now drink black. We were introduced to our bus, which was to be our traveling home for the rest of the European trip, also our Italian driver, whose name was Carlos. Our crew of 44 completely filled every seat on the bus. The "director" or "leader" as we called him, speaks four languages, plus some Spanish and Arabic. Carlos does not speak English, or so he claimed, although we suspect that he knew more English than he let on, just so he would not be bothered by talkative passengers while he was trying to concentrate on his driving.

So off we went to Amsterdam. The houses along the way were of little brown brick. The little Dutch children are so cute, with their blonde hair and rosy little cheeks. The little ones wore such short skirts, or short pants and jackets. Their little bare legs looked so cold. Some of the young men and girls riding bicycles, too, wore very short shorts, while others were all bundled up. There were also many motorcycles, some with side cars attached. In contrast to England, everyone was now driving on the right side again, much to our relief.

On our way to Amsterdam we soon saw our first windmill, and the tour bus stopped to give us all the opportunity to take pictures of this famous Dutch symbol. Actually, whereas the windmills were originally used to pump the water from a landscape below sea level, they have now been replaced by electrically powered pumps, and for all practical purposes the windmills are now obsolete and more of a tourist attraction than anything else.

When we arrived at "The Hague" we took a picture of the Peace Palace, and several other notable buildings were pointed out to us. However, they all looked alike to me. As we drove past the residential housing, I was impressed by the large picture windows, and how clean and shining they were. It seemed that many of the ladies were busy washing windows, and all the windows had lovely lace curtains.

When we arrived in Amsterdam, our troupe of 44 was treated to a tour in one of those modern, streamlined sightseeing boats up and down the miles of canals. We saw the Rembrandt house at one point and also passed a huge passenger ship laid up in dry dock. The canals were lined on either side by tall, mostly three-story houses, most of which had pointed gables which stuck out to accommodate a winch with which to hoist up heavy furniture to the upper stories. We were repeatedly passing under bridges with which the city abounded, some 700, I believe the guide said. Some of the canals were so narrow the boat had to maneuver back and forth a few times to get around the curves. It seemed like most of the buildings were of dirty old red brick.

Came lunchtime we were taken to the Five Flies, a famous old restaurant. It was such a quaint place after we entered we walked down to a basement and then up to the ground floor again on the other side. We had steak for lunch, followed by ice cream lit up with sparklers. The service was wonderful and the food superb. It was all very festive - we even had our pictures taken at the dining table. By three o'clock we were taken to our lodging place - the Krasnapolsky Hotel a lovely structure looking out upon the Dam Place, the latter featuring a huge modern War Memorial in its center. We were fortunate in getting a lovely big room that looked out directly on the square. The rest of the afternoon was free time. While Ben slept, I did some laundry, had a good bath and washed my hair, and felt 100% better.

Before dinner we took a delightful walk down some real cobblestone streets along a canal, sniffing the many beautiful flowers that were displayed in flower carts along the way. We stopped in at a little sidewalk cafe, of which there were several, and had two cups of very good coffee. How pleasant to sit at the tiny tables and watch the people go by! Unfortunately, the tulips, for which the Dutch are so famous, were not in bloom at this time, it being too late in the season.

We had a marvelous dinner in the Garden Room Restaurant of the Krasnapolsky Hotel. It was such a lovely big room that resembled a huge greenhouse, with palm trees placed about the floor and monstrous baskets of greenery hanging from the ceiling. Shortly after dinner, about 10 PM, we went to bed, after a long, eventful day.

Sunday, June 24. We were up at six, had breakfast and were in the bus by 8:30, half an hour late getting away. Somebody had misplaced their passport and the guide was hard put retrieving it. As we drove through the countryside we saw many windmills, two different kinds, in fact, and lots of cows and sheep. Most of this land was "polder", that is, land recovered from previous sea bottom. It takes twenty years to convert such land into arable soil, we were told.

We drove on through the city of Rotterdam, next to New York the busiest seaport in the world, we were told. We could see the tall control tower which directed the complex shipping traffic coming and going, night and day. There were two restaurants in the tower, one lower and the other at the top.

BELGIUM. We crossed the border into Belgium at Zundert. No one asked to see our passports. Once in Belgium we immediately noticed a change in the architecture of the buildings. I thought the farm houses look peculiar, two story, no eaves, and so thin it almost looked as if someone had come along and sliced off part of the house with a big knife. The first town we came to we were delayed by a church parade in the middle of the street celebrating some religious festival (it was Sunday.) As we passed the parade we saw two women with buckets, sprinkling something on the street. Everyone in the procession was in costume, and we could see lit candles in the windows of the houses. Each town we came to seemed to have its own kind of parade that day.

Before we crossed the border we were supposed to have had a "rest stop" but unfortunately, it being Sunday, the place on his schedule was closed, and our guide was unable to find another suitable place to accommodate 44 people. One and a half hours later many of the people in the bus were really getting desperate, and the guide was considering letting us all out into the woods and fend for ourselves. Finally, the guide found some dingy little restaurant that was open and would accept us. To our horror we found it had only one dirty little rest room and the men and women had to take their turns as best they could. A real mess, but finally everyone was relieved. As we drove on we saw some of the finest residential buildings of the entire trip. The houses had thatched roofs and were built of either white or red bricks. The grounds were simply beautiful.

As we came into Brussels we drove past the Royal Palace, all decked out nicely with the guards in their uniforms standing out front. However, we were not allowed to stop, as security was real tight. We found Brussels to be a lovely and very interesting city. As we drove past the site of the World Fair we had a good view of the Atomium and some of its other outstanding buildings.

We went straight on to the Plaza Hotel, which was to be our lodging for the night, and immediately went to the dining room to have a rather large lunch of french fries and fried chicken, the latter looking more like turkey. There were two more courses, but I forget what they consisted of. After checking in we went on a city sightseeing tour of Brussels. We saw the Justice Building where the Supreme Court sits. It was not open to the public. There was also a lovely statue or War Memorial to the Unknown Soldier, in honor of those who died in both world wars. We then saw and went through the St. Gudule church. It was French Gothic, built in 1216-1438. It was very beautiful, our guide, Heinz Biederman, called it "Petrified Music." We next drove to The Place, or The Plaza, a magnificent 13th Century Court, in which the sculptured face of each building was an outstanding masterpiece of art, created by the Craft Guilds. The stone surfaces had become blackened with age, and the city was in the process of cleaning them. This showed up in a marked contrast, with one-half of the buildings in gloaming white stone and the other half very black.

The Plaza was so beautiful we walked back to it again that night to see it lit up under the floodlights. We saw the lovely Opera House, and stopped in at some of the shops. They had so many beautiful things, especially in cloths. We watched them making a tablecloth in one shop. I bought two of the Ecru tablecloths in one of the shops.

As we walked back to the hotel, we stopped for coffee at one of the sidewalk cafes. It was served in a little silver one-cup dripilator very novel. Wish I had one. Monday, June 25. We had our first real continental breakfast rolls, jam and coffee, then were off on the bus by 8:10

AM. We will do a lot of driving today, some 400 miles, in fact.

The countryside we were now traveling through was especially beautiful, the Ardennes Forest, rolling hills, pasturelands and lots of cows. The trees were thick and tall and everything was so nice and green. We are seeing a lot of apple and cherry trees in this area. In Europe the forests are planted and no one can cut down a tree without permission. When a tree is cut down a replacement has to be planted.

We drove through the area of the famous battlefields of Bastogne and stopped there to view the tank and statue of Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe of World War II fame. When faced with an ultimatum to surrender he is reputed to have answered with the one word, "Nuts!" They even have a "Nuts Museum" here.

We stopped for lunch at Bastogne. Most of the houses here are of stone. We are also beginning to see a number of Chateaus. Women are draping laundry on the grass as well as on clotheslines. We are viewing miles of planted fir trees, sections of which are at different states of growth. There are also fields of gorgeous yellow wild flowers, such as mimosa and sweet peas, and domestic flowers, such as lilacs and rhododendrons.

The terrain is now beginning to become more mountainous with a lot of outcroppings of exposed slate. Many of the big Belgian horses we see have their tails cropped to where they are only about a foot long.

LUXEMBOURG. We have now come to the Belgian-Luxembourg border. Luxembourg is one of those small, independent principalities of Europe, having only a population of about 200,000, but it is one of its larger steel producers. We enjoyed a good lunch here, then hurried off without having any time to take pictures. I dashed off a postcard to Kim, and paid the postal clerk to put a stamp on it and mail it. Much in evidence was the old 12th century wall and its towers. We visited the American Cemetery and Memorial. The grounds are very beautiful and well kept. So many, many rows and crosses. General George Patton is buried here.

GERMANY. We crossed into Germany at the Mosselle River. This is one of the few places we had our passports stamped. The fields here are divided into funny little strips of land, each seemingly growing a different crop. In handing down the formerly large estates to more and more heirs, after several generations the portions got smaller and smaller, until they were reduced to the tiny strips we see today. Sprinkled in some of the fields along the road are lovely red poppies. People in the fields are hoeing the crops, or pitching hay into mounds. Along both sides of the road are rows of poplars, planted by Napoleon, we are told, so he could find his way back.

Our route took us over a mountain and then down into the Saar Valley where we see evidence of immense amounts of coal being mined, and at Wolkingen, where we had a rest stop, there are a number of huge steel mills. There are massive slag piles to be seen everywhere, and when they reach a certain height, grass is planted on them to top them off. The Saar Valley is the second largest iron and steel complex in Europe, next only to the Ruhr Valley. The city of Wolkingen was practically destroyed during the war, and much of the bomb damage is still in evidence in the old city walls. The buildings as a result are mostly all new and modern.

Leaving the Saar Valley, we are now rolling along the divided Autobahn Highway that eventually leads to Berlin, and we are entering the Rhine Valley with all its lovely vineyards. We passed by a 12th century medieval castle, now in ruins, then crossed over the Rhine River at Mannheim. There are beautiful farmlands in the surrounding countryside, and although it is now 7:15 PM, men, women and children are still working in the tiny fields. I suppose they work until it is dark.

We have been passing huge U.S. Army Installations all afternoon, and the largest of them all, I believe, is at Mannheim.

From there we crossed the beautiful Neckar River into good old Heidelberg. Long before we arrived at the city we could see the grand old Heidelberg Castle on the side of the mountain. By now it is 8:00 PM and we take a short city tour, which included the Bismark Platz, and a few other sites. We arrived at our hotel and had our rooms assigned. We were fortunate in getting another lovely room, better than the average, then had dinner, which was lesser than average.

By this time it was 9:30, and we had had a long day, but tired as we were, we piled into the bus again to go to a "typical" Student Inn. After leaving the bus we walked down a narrow cobblestone lane to the inn. It was packed with students, U.S. Air Force and army men, and two other busloads of tourists. The music was very loud and lively, presented by three people decked out in their colorful costumes. Our waitress was very blonde and very, very buxom. She could carry five steins of beer in each hand without any problem. We each drank a huge stein of Heidelberg beer. One show-off on the stage was drinking a large plastic and transparent boot full of beer, to the cheers of the watching crowd. All very festive and merry. By 11 PM we all left.

Ben had told me so much about the Heidelberg Castle up on the hill that he had visited on his previous trip in 1955, and since we would be leaving early in the morning, this would be our only chance to see it. Late though it was, Ben, Mrs. Paulette Slegrist and I hired a taxi at 11 PM to drive us up the mountainside to the castle, which was still floodlit on its face. We arrived there, and the gates were still open, and although the face of it was floodlit, the light was rather dim in the courtyards back of it. We walked around on the terrace and looked down on the beautiful city below. Such a view! It was well worth it.

We had been traveling on the bus for 12 hours. It was now midnight and we were dead tired when we got back to the hotel. We had fine beds with huge down pillows and comforters, and we slept like logs.

Tuesday, June 26. Much as we needed our rest, Ben accidentally woke us up an hour early. Ugh! Had our good old hard rolls and coffee and off we went on the bus for another long day. I hated to rush off from Heidelberg so soon. It was such an interesting place. I would have loved to have spent several days there. Outside of town we passed a fenced area with tiny plots of flowers and vegetables, dotted with tiny doll-like houses. They belong to city folks who enjoy gardening for a hobby in their spare time. The little houses, which they could lock, held their tools and a change of clothes. We just passed a woman who was leading an ox pulling a plow, the latter being guided by a man. The fields of grain and other crops are most unusually small, a few hundred feet long by about 50 feet wide, in which grain, vegetables, potatoes, etc., alternate. After hearing so much about the beautiful Black Forest for days from Heinz, we finally arrived there, and I must agree. It is really beautiful. Our rest stop is at Titisee, a beautiful big resort lake surrounded by mountains. We drove on to the little village of Bonndorf and the Schwarzwald

Hotel, where we had lunch. The latter consisted of fillet steak and huge glasses of red wine. When we got back on the bus we slept all the way to our next stop at the Rheinfals, which are the beginning of the Rhein River. Here we took some pictures of these beautiful falls and walked along the interesting paths and over picturesque stone bridges.

SWITZERLAND. We drove on through gorgeous countryside and on to the historic city of Zurich, stopping in the middle of the town on the shores of lovely Lake Zurich to take pictures. Mostly all the houses here are in Swiss Chalet style, and like most of the houses in the previous countries, they too have window boxes filled with beautiful bright flowers geraniums, petunias and the most gorgeous roses. In the two countries of Germany and in Switzerland especially there were an abundance of climbing red and pink roses.

We arrived at Lucerne at about 7 PM, another lovely city on a picturesque lake, and stopped at some hotel that was on the tour guide's schedule. Evidently, there was some mix-up, since this hotel was not expecting us and did not have any rooms to spare. So the busload climbed a steep hill to the Montana Hotel a beautiful view from here. Half our group stayed there and the rest of us went down by cable car to the Palace Hotel, one of the finer ones in the Deluxe class. Things were kind of fouled up. Poor Carlos, in tears and most unhappy. He had a lot of extra work to do in sorting out and loading and unloading luggage. So far on this trip we have been most fortunate in our room assignments, and always have had a room with a bath. Some of the others did not, and when they didn't they were most unhappy about it. This was one of those times when some in our tour did not get baths with their rooms. It so happened that those with a beautiful view of the lake and mountains had no baths, and those of us that had smaller rooms with a bath. had no view. I soaked a long time in a hot bath and then stayed draped in a monstrously big towel, hoping our luggage would arrive before dinner. It finally did arrive, but only after I had got back into my dirty clothes. I rushed and changed again, and all very tired, we piled into the bus again and went out to the Flores Hotel dining room at 9:30 PM.

The restaurant was very novel, completely out of doors under large trees. We had excellent entertainment from the time we arrived until the time we left at 11 PM. With the dinner we had plenty of white wine and that old Swiss favorite, cheese fondue, with everyone dipping into a large pot of hot, melted cheese in the center of the table. After that we had Swiss sausage and French fries (everyone here serves French fries). Then for dessert we had ice cream with a little Swiss flag stuck in it. When we got back to the hotel, we fixed instant coffee for Joan Reltsma in Jan's room and had conversation and looked at the beautiful view from her picture window until one in the morning.

Wednesday, June 27. This morning I broke down and had some scrambled eggs and bacon with my "continental breakfast", ($1.00 extra) the first since we left home. I just couldn't face another cold hard roll. The coffee, however, is real good, but quite strong. Here it is served with a pot of hot water, and diluted with cream and sugar. It's very good. On our sightseeing tour this morning we went to see the lovely "Lion Monument", which shows the dying lion. It is carved in the face of a large stone. In memory of the Swiss Guard that died defending Marie Antoinette during the French Revolution. We browsed around some of the shops, but only ended up buying a watch for Kim, and one for me. Had a good lunch at our hotel dining room. We were planning to take a trip by cable car and funicular railway up to the top of beautiful Mt. Pilatus, but since it was cloudy and rainy, we could not. I was very disappointed. We spent most of the afternoon exploring the streets and the many interesting shops. While having dinner in the hotel dining room, I thought I recognized a girl I went to high school with in Colorado. Sure enough, it was Peggy Hampshire, now married to Chuck Lamper, both of whom now reside in Grand Junction, Colorado. It's a small world, after all.

I am snuggled in bed as I am writing this. Such beds they have here! We have had a king size bed everywhere we have stayed except in London. Here we have great big thick down comforters and giant pillows, not to mention several tiny pillows for good measure. As we drive through the countryside, piles of bedding can be seen in the open upstairs windows, out for airing.

In both Germany and Switzerland, as we pass through the villages we see the farmers' barns attached to their dwellings. The buildings are quite large and some of the barns are also decorated with flowers in the window boxes. In Germany there is usually a big pile of manure in front of the barn, next to the street. They proudly display these as an indication of wealth - the bigger the manure pile the more animals the farmer owns. The towns also have a big watering trough in the town square. The people are snowbound part of the winter, at which time it is most convenient to be close to their animals, the reason for having the barn attached to the house.

Thursday, June 28. Well, here we are settled in the bus ready to leave for Innsbruck, Austria. It's a beautiful clear day. I wish it had been like this yesterday - we could have gone up Mt. Pilatus. I wish we were staying here longer. We are traveling through some of the most wonderful scenery, the magnificent Alps. There is a lot of snow on them and we see waterfalls, big and small, everywhere. Where one peak had been climbed a white cross has been erected.

The farmers live in villages and they raise hay on the steep mountainsides. We see them cutting the hay by hand with a scythe. The terrain is too steep to use machinery. We did see one tractor, however. The women, too, work in the fields, tossing hay in order to first dry it, then gather it into piles. Most of the women wear long dresses. I have only seen two women in slacks. The cattle look beautiful, big, fat and grayish tan in color. Some have horns, and each one has a big cowbell. A farmer can identify his own cows and also his neighbors cows by the sound of the bells, even though they might not be in sight.

We have come to a rest stop high up in the mountains at Cafe Kerenzer-Berghus, where we had some good coffee and pastry. The cafe is on Lake Wallensee, at Filzbock, Switzerland. The view from here is absolutely magnificent. Hector took a picture of us here. It is quite chilly as we look down at an emerald green lake far down below.

We drove on through the majestic scenery and passed a couple of castle ruins. Everything is so very green. Hay is draped over wire and over stakes to dry. Little sheds dot the mountainsides. They store their hay in them and in the winter they bring it down by sleds.

LIECHTENSTEIN. We have arrived at the tiny principality of Liechtenstein. First we met with Baron von Falz-Fein who gave us a short talk about his country. Then we had a very good lunch of steak and mushrooms in a little restaurant. This is considered a heavy meal here in Europe. The bus had to wait for the judge, who got lost wandering around in the village.

AUSTRIA. We leave Liechtenstein and cross into Austria. After a long drive we crossed the Ariberg Pass and had a rest stop. Such superb scenery. At 7:30 PM we arrived at the city of Innsbruck, situated in the beautiful Inn valley and on the river of the same name. After a short tour of the city and seeing some points of interest, we disembarked at the Hotel Europa. We had a fair dinner in the hotel dining room at 8:00 PM and then went upstairs to a large hall to watch a native Tirolean show. It was quite good, consisting of singers, dancers, with yodeling, and music with accordian, zither and harp. I had a front seat with Joan and Jan and others. Ben came in a little late, and try as we may, we couldn't find a chair for him next to us. So he sat down at the back of the room. No sooner had he sat down when along came a beautiful (so I've been told at least a million times!) blonde Austrian Princess who looked like a movie star and sat down beside him. I guess everyone on the tour saw her but me. Finally Joan got up and went over to Ben and said in a loud voice, "Go up front and sit with your wife!" Ben just said, "Why? I'm happy where I am." Seems like all the Englishmen sitting at the table behind him got a big kick out of it all and had a good laugh.

After the show we went up to Jan's room and had some champagne to celebrate Paulette Slegrist's birthday. After that, I took a hot bath and went to bed. Such a good bed! Love those down comforters and pillows.

Friday, June 29. Had "breakfast" at 7:00 AM. Coffee was 50 cents a cup at dinner. Wow! Seems like everywhere on this trip they try to put off serving coffee as long as possible.

We got off on the road before 8:00 AM for a change. We saw part of the new European Highway now under construction and saw some of the supports for a terrifically high bridge they were building. I guess it will be quite a fine road when it is finished. We passed Brenner Lake and crossed the Italian border at Brenner Pass at about 4100-foot elevation.

ITALY. We got some American money changed into Lire. Such a mess of paper! For $70 we received 43,000 Lire, 615 Lire per dollar. The border guards checked our passports, but did not stamp them. Father Valencia, a Mexican national, did not have an Italian visa for some reason, and as a result we were held up at the border for quite a long time. Our guide, Heinz, and he walked about a mile to the police station and finally got him a visa. One lady on the bus volunteered that Father Valencia would have even more trouble at the Spanish border, because Spain and Mexico have broken diplomatic relations. Switzerland and Austria had been so clean and tidy, but the moment we crossed into Italy nothing was very clean. We drove on through the majestic Dolomite mountains. They rise sharply on either side of the highway. We could see holes up in the rocks where snipers had hid out during the war and a few men could control the pass. At one place we saw bombed-out ruins of houses and a fort. In fact, a whole city had been bombed out and abandoned since World War 1. Drove on through those unbelievable Dolomites. They are very rugged and seem to go on forever. Lots of snow on them.

Drove through the city of Cortina d'Ampezzo (3000 pop.) where the 1956 Winter Olympics were held. What a beautiful valley! Had lunch in an Italian restaurant high up on a mountaintop that overlooked the valley. We had our first Lasagna, and did it ever taste good! Also, the wine was light and excellent, but it always makes me so sleepy. We drove back down the mountain and drove past the ski jump used during the Olympics. We stopped and took some pictures. Carlos can really handle this big bus. He misses stonewalls by inches where the gates are narrow. We drove out of the mountains and into the Po valley. It is the most fertile valley in Italy, having many vineyards, orchards and fields of grain. We now started seeing those famous cypress trees, and also some feudal estates or villas on the high hills. After coming to Mestre we drove on over a causeway underpinned by 80,000 oak pilings leading on to Venice.

Our leader had phoned ahead to have water taxis ready to take us from a parking lot to our hotel. Carlos unloaded us and our luggage, and then with piles of our luggage we got into motor boats (our taxis) and off we zoomed to the Bauer Gruenwald Hotel. Venice is an unbelievable city, out in a lagoon and completely built on pilings. All the streets are really canals. It seems so strange to go down a canal and see those monstrous buildings rising stories high up on either side right out of the water - no set-back and no sidewalks, and to see the water running in under many of the doorways. The water is not very clean. In fact, all the sewage is run directly into the canals, and the only cleaning action is the coming and going of a changing tide.

Saturday, June 30. We visited the St. Mark's Square and the huge St. Mark's Church. Its ceiling is covered with beautiful mosaic designs and gold mosaic backgrounds. We saw and went through the Doges Palace and saw much that was interesting - murals by Tintoretto and Titian, halls of old armor, a machine gun designed by Michelangelo. The paintings were most magnificent, and in the Great Council Hall was the largest oil painting in the world - 'The Glory of Paradise" by Tintoretto.

We saw some of the dungeons where, we were told, prisoners were stashed and forgotten, and where during high tides in the winter the water would come into the cells and the prisoners would sometimes be standing waist deep in water. Lord Byron spent 10 days in one of those dungeons in order to get inspiration for writing his poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon." He didn't. We also crossed the "Bridge of Sighs", reputedly where prisoners were led off to the dungeon, and where through the grillwork they got their last look at the outside world and beautiful Venice. We went to a glass factory and saw many beautiful artifacts of glass and artisans at work blowing glass. The last evening in Venice we went on a lovely gondola ride, with four or five people in each gondola. We all went up the Grand Canal as a group and had an opera singer serenade us, as well as an accordion player accompanying him. It was all very delightful. Such beautiful singing. Some of the gondoliers sang, too. Our gondolier invited Ben to try his hand at rowing or poling the gondola, and Ben took him up on the offer and in a few minutes had the "hang" of it all. It was all very romantic. Wish the ride would have lasted longer.

After the ride we walked to the St. Mark's Piazza, drank a cup of cappuccino and listened to a concert.

Sunday, July 1. Up early, as usual, and left in the water taxis for the bus and were off for Florence. We traveled over a lovely new highway and a long, high bridge. We saw St. Anthony's Church in Padua in which St. Anthony's tomb is located, along with his preserved tongue (supposedly.) We had lunch in Bologna, which is supposed to have the best food in Italy. The wine was excellent, but the lunch wasn't all that good. Almost everyone bought some extra bottles of wine to take along. We almost didn't have lunch at all, since at this time all the restaurants were on strike. After a short sightseeing tour in Bologna, we checked in at the Minerva Hotel in Florence. After dinner, although we were quite tired, we went en masse to the town piazza to listen to an orchestra and some opera singers. Gateway, our tour company, treated us to free drinks on this occasion. Also had some black coffee.

Monday, July 2. A woman local guide led us on a city tour through Florence. Saw the beautiful golden doors of the Baptistery, sometimes referred to as "The Gates of Paradise." We went through a leather factory, then a silver factory. We then drove to the left bank of the Arno River to the Pitti Palace, a huge stone structure, where we saw a part of its art collection. The museum also had some magnificent tables, constructed of natural colored marble mosaics. One table took many artisans and fourteen years to make. One table was done in malachite. Had our pictures taken in Michelangelo Square, high up in the mountain overlooking Florence. The Medici family were most prominent and ruled Florence for many generations in the Middle Ages.

After lunch Ben took a nap and then got a haircut. I browsed the streets alone, bought an alabaster ashtray and a silver salt spoon, and saw the numerous shops on the Ponte Vecchio bridge.

Back at the Minerva Hotel. We had a very nice room overlooking a square. Lovely tiled bath, dark blue floor and multi-colored walls. We drank one of our bottles of wine from Bologna during dinner. Ben met an old acquaintance, Fred Bieger, in the dining room. He was the man he had met in Munich during his trip there seven years ago, and with whom he had spent quite a bit of time traveling around in Germany and Austria. They had a real nice visit again. At the hotel desk we picked up three letters from home.

Tuesday, July 3. Up early again and off on the bus, headed for Rome. I slept a lot on the bus. It seemed we passed nothing but old yellow ruins along the way, and the streets in the towns we drove through were very narrow. We arrived at Assisi where we had a good lunch in a hotel near the famous Monastery. Then we walked up a narrow street to the beautiful church of St. Francis. A young Irish priest showed us through the church. It is called a Basilica and was most unusual, with low ceilings and built on three levels. There were beautiful frescos on the ceilings. It is a monastery for the Franciscan Order of Monks. We also saw St. Francis' tomb in the Basilica.

On and off to Rome. We passed some ancient aqueducts on the way. Rome is a huge city of three million people, spread over several hills. It once had a population of eight million. We arrived at our destination, the Claridge Hotel, around dinnertime. We had the smallest and darkest room of our trip so far, but we had an excellent dinner. We are paying for our own meals in Rome. Went to bed early.

Wednesday, July 4. Sightseeing in Rome all day. Went to St. Peter's Square. Huge crowds everywhere, with much pushing and shoving. Saw Pope John in a window of the Vatican and heard him speak. We went in to St. Peter's Basilica and saw St. Peter's chains, Michelangelo's statue of Moses, beautiful columns, and many other fabulous statues and paintings. While in the church the Colonel's wallet was stolen. He carried it in his hip pocket.

That evening we took a nightclub tour - "Rome by Night." The first night club we were taken to was 'The House of Caesar." A doorman dressed as a Roman warrior greeted us. We were then seated outdoors in a sort of tent affair under blue and red awnings. The waiters wore red togas in the style of Ancient Rome. We were served champagne and danced under the stars.

The next nightclub was in a cellar. We watched dancers do the twist. After a long wait we were finally served champagne. We were also supposed to get a snack to eat, but as usual, the guide loused us up. At the next place we were served wine. In the last place we saw a floor show and had champagne.

Thursday, July 5. We had the whole day free. Went back to the Vatican Museum to see what we had missed the day before. Got back for lunch at 2:00 PM. I was very tired and after eating I went to bed.

After a nap, we went to Alfredo's famous restaurant with Paulette and Linda Slegrist. The violinists serenaded us with "Irrivadercca Roma" and other Italian pieces. We had Alfredo's fabulous noodles for dinner and then I was given the serving platter for "good luck."

There was some kind of a mix-up with two taxis, but we finally got into one and rushed off to see the opera "Alda", which was held out in the open at the ancient Roman Baths of Caracalla. The traffic was terrible. There don't seem to be any traffic lights, signals or speed limits, or anything else. Everybody just drives like crazy. Murder! But somehow our driver zipped around and got us to the opera on time at 9:00 PM.

It was held out in the open and the stage was built into the ancient ruins. We had cushioned seats. The program said it was the largest stage in the world. Magnificent opera. We took a bus back to the hotel, arriving at 1:30 AM. Packed and went to bed at 2:30.

Friday, July 6. Got up at 5:30 after three hours of sleep and off on the bus at 7:00 AM. Slept most of the time. After the morning rest stop we had our first view of the Mediterranean Sea. We drove on down the coast and through Naples, reputed to be the poorest city in Italy. It is a very large city with many huge apartment buildings and miles of the most horrible slums. I had to cover my nose with a hanky - the stench was so terrible. The squalor was unbelievable.

Drove on down the Aplan Way and saw a huge ancient Roman amphitheatre and many other ancient Roman ruins. We saw clothes strung out on lines across the streets. We passed huge sulphur plants. Stopped at a cameo shop. The items were very expensive.

We arrived at Pompeii. Here we had lunch, after which we had an hour's tour of the ancient ruins. We could see the old chariot tracks in the stone-laid streets. If there was one upright stone in the street, it was one-way, if two. It was a two-way street. Some of the old ruins of buildings still showed beautiful baths with mosaic floors. Also the kitchens were identifiable and we even saw the remains of copper pipes.

On to Sorrento. When we got there we hiked down several flights of steps from high cliffs to the boat landing, carrying our tote bags along with us. We boarded a small boat that now took us on a one and a half hour trip to Capri. The seas were rough and the boat rolled considerably. Two people became ill.

Finally we arrived at Capri. Toting our gear we walked along the docks - such a bedraggled little army! Finally Der Leader got us a few local taxis and off we sped on a narrow winding road on the edge of the steep mountainside. Thank goodness there was a stonewall on the drop-off side. The taxis were open with a fringe on top and had several seats, more like a bus. The driver was giving us a thrill ride, driving with reckless abandon as if he didn't care whether we dropped over the edge or not. I enjoyed it all, but a surprising number of our people didn't like any part of it. I think they were scared half out of their wits.

We arrived at our hotel, the Europa Palace, very high up on the mountain. Fortunately, we were assigned the best room yet of our entire trip. We have two bathrooms, a living room, and a balcony overlooking the hill and the garden. Also we have piped music in the room and yellow tiled floors - just lovely. After a good dinner, off to bed. Saturday, July 7. Today we took a taxi to the town square of Capri. Browsed around in art shops and walked down winding cobblestone streets. I have never seen such lovely clothes as in these shops. After lunch we took a chair lift ride to the very top of Mt. Solaro, (1932 feet.) Joan, Paulette and Linda went also, but Jan was too afraid to go up. Joan was pretty nervous also, and Ben singing "Goodnight, Irene, goodnight!" didn't help any.

After we got back we took another wild taxi ride down along the steep mountainside to take a boat ride into the Blue Grotto. Jan missed that too. Joan went, but still scared. Once inside, Joyce went over the side of the boat and swam in the clear water. It was beautiful so sparkling and so blue. I put my feet in and they looked an eerie white under the water. It is certainly a beautiful place.

At dinnertime we met our friend, Fred Bieger again and Ben had a long conversation with him. He is heading up another tour group. I wish we could stay here for a week.

Sunday, July 8. Well, we got up early to rush around so we could stand on the dock in the hot sun and wait and wait for the ship at 9:00 AM. The ship arrived on time and we took off for Naples. The boat ride was most enjoyable. We passed a hydrofoil boat that was going like a streak. When we arrived in Naples Bay, we found that the U.S. fleet was in the harbor. We could see big carriers (one was the Shangri-la), destroyers and submarines.

After we arrived we again stood in the hot sun and waited. Finally the bus arrived and took us to the railroad station in Naples. Then we waited another hour for the train to arrive. All we do is rush to wait. After we boarded the train we went to the dining car and had a huge five-course lunch. One whole car was reserved just for our Gateway group, and we found ourselves in compartments of about six people in each. We went through numerous tunnels. The countryside looks much like the midwest. We arrived in Rome at about 3:00 PM. Four of the ladies who had stayed over in Rome now joined us again. At 6:30 we were off again on the train headed for Genoa. Had a delicious dinner - two desserts. Also our first olives since arriving in Italy. We saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa through the train windows. After dinner we went through some real pretty country. The mountains looked like the Dolomites. We are traveling close to the sea and going through dozens of tunnels. Although the train was real noisy, on this trip we got to telling jokes In our compartment, and especially with Paulette Slegrist leading the way. It was a real riot. Ben said he had never laughed so hard in all his life.

As we neared Genoa we were asked (or told) to move to the back of the train to make room for another group, apparently, and that we would have to stand for 10 to 15 minutes while they reconnected or rearranged cars. As it turned out we had to stand up for a whole hour, with our kit and caboodle in hand. Finally we got off in Genoa and hiked up a long flight of stairs in the station and walked to our hotel, the Colombia Excelsior, a lovely hotel. It was after 10:00 PM when we arrived. We had a most heavenly bed and I was ever so glad to get into it.

Monday, July 9. We met up with Carlos and our bus again and had a beautiful trip along the rugged coast through the Sea Alps.

MONACO. After having lunch at San Remo we followed the coast to Monte Carlo. Here we took a little trip around the city and the Castle, the Sea Museum and stopped to go through the Casino. We could see Onassis' huge yacht in the lovely harbor below.

FRANCE. We drove on to Nice and checked in at the Atlantic Hotel. We had baths with our room, some of our people did not. We loaned our bath to Linda and her mother. Took a walk through a lovely park and on to the beach. No sand at the beach, just big rocks the size of a football. Saw lots of pretty gals in bikinis. Such lovely brown bodies.

While in Nice a group of us sent a wire of protest to Gateway headquarters in Lugano, Switzerland, demanding that we get grouped into a bus with no more than 28 people, as we had been promised in the tour literature. We were all getting mighty tired of 44 people trudging in and out of the bus every time we came to a stop.

Tuesday, July 10. Went on a tour of Cannes, then drove up the mountains to the town of Fragenard and a perfume factory. Everything smelled heavenly. The cutest little Italian lady, who had been taught English by an Irish priest, showed us how perfume and soap were made. Such charm and wit! I bought a few items.

Drove back to Cannes and stayed about an hour. Saw a lot of beautiful huge yachts in the harbor, one of which was from Wisconsin. The beaches were sandy here. Saw an artist with a palette knife doing a lovely floral painting with the paint as much as half an inch thick in places. Saw a Cannes beach scene I would have loved to have had. Arrived back at the hotel about 7:30, just In time for dinner. Took a walk after dinner.

Wednesday, July 11. Up at 6 AM. Breakfast the usual continental and into the bus. We bypassed Cannes and drove through fields of lavender and other flowers. Most of the latter were under the shade of coverings of wooden slats. Practically all these flowers are used in the making of perfume.

Drove on through the so-called Van Gogh country and had lunch at Aries, where Van Gogh spent much of his time and did some of his best paintings. There are lots of lovely fields and vineyards everywhere. There are caves in the nearby rock formations which contain primitive paintings some 4000 years old, which were discovered only recently. The soil here is very red and there are many outcroppings of huge rocks. Also, at Aries we discovered our first "sunken" toilet. Had lunch at Aries in a rather smelly restaurant. (No connection between the two.) Mountains of rice was one of the courses.

After a short ride we arrived at Mimes and checked in at the Imperator Hotel for the night. After dinner Biederman had a meeting with our group to determine how many of us wanted to go into a new bus to reduce the overcrowded 44 in the present setup. Only seven of us insisted, the others "chickened" out. Anyway, he agreed to get us a second bus or limousine after much phoning back and forth to headquarters. We were happy. Went for a walk in a park that had beautifully landscaped gardens, canals, swans swimming around, and indirect lighting on the statues. These were the Gardens of Diana, originally built as Roman baths. At this time a festival was going on in the old Roman ruins. We could only see a small part of the goings on, since people were admitted only by invitation. We walked up a set of stairs and winding paths leading up the side of the mountain, all covered with trees which were also lighted. It was one of the loveliest parks I have ever seen on the whole trip. We came down some steep stairs that were carved into the rock of the mountain until we came to a grotto which had a beautiful waterfall flowing over the top.

Bought an ice cream cone after we were back down. The ice cream is very good in Europe. Saw the ruins of an old Roman Temple and the large facade of a theatre that was built a hundred years ago. The theatre itself was burned down by an opera singer some ten years ago. Also in the outskirts of the city was a huge Roman arena still in very good condition. It could seat 20,000 people and was the largest in Europe, next to Rome. The gardens around the hotel were lovely - lots of muscatel grapes.

Thursday, July 12. Off to Barcelona today. At Perpignan we had a delicious lunch of beef stew in lieu of roast pork. The weather is hot and some of us didn't want to risk eating pork out here. Had quite a time trying to get iced tea, but finally got a pitcher of hot tea and a bucket of ice.

SPAIN. We crossed the border at Junquero, where we had to show our passports. The guards took a lot of bags out of the luggage compartment, but did not open any of them. We drove through some beautiful country, with many vineyards in evidence. I thought the country was noticeably cleaner than it had been in Italy and the part of France we had just left. There were many cork oaks in the countryside. They harvest the bark from these trees every three or four years. This they then ship to Germany and from there it goes out in the form of cork. Saw police patrolling the highway. We pass many little carts with big wheels drawn by one horse or a mule, or a donkey. Some carts had canvasses covering them, and a lot of them had a little dog tied on a leash following. Usually the dog would stick close to the cart so that it could stay in its shade. There are lots of gnarled old olive trees along the wayside, and a lot of bicycles and motorcycles on the road.

We drove on through the fertile Ebro Valley. Everything is so much greener here than we had expected. We drove on over the foothills of the Pyrenees mountains near the ocean and arrived at Barcelona at dinnertime. Barcelona is a lovely city of one and a half million. It has wide boulevards with double avenues and a wide paved center strip for strolling pedestrians. There are lots of flowers and lots of places to sit. Also, the city has many beautiful large fountains.

We checked in at the Manila Hotel. The room was quite warm and no air conditioning. I had been riding in the rear of the bus most of the day and had caught a cold, so didn't feel too well. Had dinner in a lovely dining room on the ninth floor of the hotel. The dining room had large windows and we had a good view overlooking the city. Four of the Mexicans are staying over in Barcelona and will meet us later in Madrid.

After dinner we had another discussion with "der Leader". We seven insisted he make good on his promise to get us a second bus. After a phone call to company headquarters he told us the company insisted they were within their proper limit of 40 persons on the bus. The fact that when the Mexicans return we will again be overloaded was ignored. We were much disgusted.

Friday, July 13. This morning Ben had a headache and didn't feel too good, so he stayed in bed. Probably too much vino last night. I went sightseeing with the group. Saw a beautiful cathedral that has now been turned into a museum. We also saw the sight of the World's Fair held here in the 1920's. There are many replicas of houses from each province in Spain. Now they house shops displaying merchandise and crafts. There is a huge 200-foot high statue of Columbus overlooking the harbor.

We returned to the hotel for lunch. Ben now felt OK. After lunch we walked down to the harbor where they had an exact replica of Columbus' ship, the Santa Maria. We went aboard and looked it over. It looked pretty crude as a craft with which to cross the Atlantic. We then hired a motorboat and took a cruise around the harbor. Next we went through the Maritime Museum, all of which was extremely interesting. Went to a huge department store, the Casa Jorba, where I tried to find a dress for Kim, but no luck.

We went back to the hotel and had dinner in the ninth floor dining room. At this time we received a picture of our group taken in St. Peter's Square in Rome. Heinz Biederman is leaving the group to go into advertising work at the company headquarters in Lugano, Switzerland.

Saturday, July 14. Left at regular time this AM. Met our new tour guide. He is a robust young German fellow of 25, and his name is Dietrich Kronzucker. The last name, translated from German into English, means "crown sugar." However, to make it easy for us Americans he has invented the short name of Ted. He received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Vienna the day before. He is a jolly good fellow with a good sense of humor and everyone likes him immensely He is not stiff like Biederman, and the morale of the group has lifted considerably and the people are singing again.

Followed the Ebro Valley and the coastal road along to Valencia. We witnessed the strange way people here have of drawing water from a well. It is sort of a water wheel contraption. A mule or a horse is hitched to a long pole and it goes round and around in a circle turning a water wheel. More carts and mules on the road. Some of the mules carry large stacks of hay on their back. All one can see are a face and long ears at one end and a tail sticking out at the other, with a huge load of hay over it all. Poor things.

We arrive at Valencia and check in at the Astoria Hotel. It is a lovely hotel. The lobby is air-conditioned but the rooms are not they are hot! Had a good dinner with excellent vino punch. After dinner a group of us went for an hour's walk with Ted. It is real hot out, I almost wore out my new face. Paulette and I were browsing and window-shopping when we suddenly realized the rest of the group had left us and we were lost. We couldn't even remember the name of our hotel! I couldn't make myself understood in my limited Spanish, but Paulette fared a little better with her French. She explained to a nice man that we had lost our group and the man named off a list of hotels. When he came to Astoria, I recognized the name. He and his party of charming ladies escorted us all the way back to our hotel. Quite a group of our party had gathered and wondered what had happened to us. Ben was about ready to go out and start looking for us. Had another cold coke and went to bed.

Sunday, July 15. We left Valencia in the morning and a short while later Carlos discovered there was a leak in the radiator. He stopped the bus a number of times to refill the radiator, sometimes from water in a ditch along the road. Finally, at our AM rest stop, which came at about noon, he stopped the bus, pulled over on the side of the road and worked on the radiator for a long time. We were out in the middle of nowhere, but we were next to the sea. It was a very hot day, so some of us went over to the very rocky beach and waded into the cool water. Mr. Cespedos helped Carlos with the repair work. Curtis and Linda were doing the twist. Don't know how they could do it in all this heat.

Finally we were off again. Very arid and rocky country and the wind blowing through the bus is hot. There are rock walls everywhere and it is unbelievable how so much rock terracing could be done is such a dry place. The olive trees and other plants seem to be dwarfed in this dry land. Saw many ruins of old castles and high towers constructed out of stone. The towers were used to signal messages by means of mirrors.

Saw a Moorish castle on top of a high rock, and a Catholic church built on top of it all. Also passed a 56-foot statue of Christ. Lots of goat herds along the way, some black, some white, but not many mixed herds.

Just before our lunch stop we drove through a well-irrigated valley that had huge fields of date palms. It looked like an oasis in the desert. Had lunch at the Rene Victoria Hotel at Murcia at about 3:00 PM, left a little after 4:00 PM, and had our afternoon rest stop at about 5:30 PM. It was beginning to cool down a bit. We drove on through some more very arid country and into the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We passed a number of Gypsy caves that were their dwellings. They were built right into the side of the hills and had whitewashed fronts and often brightly colored doors. The chimneys would rise right out of the hills. They looked like a lot of monuments. Fascinating. Soon the sun set over the mountains. Beautiful. A full moon rose and shone over the landscape. We drove on over continually winding roads and through terribly wild looking country. The mountains were extremely rugged and rocky, with steep drop-offs from the narrow road. It all looked especially eerie in the moonlight. A lot of the younger people sang for a long time. I guess the trip was quite frightening to some. Ben and I enjoyed it, but I guess we were the only ones.

Finally, at about 10:30 we looked down into a valley and saw the bright lights of Granada. The air was very dry, and by now quite cold, something we all enjoyed after the awful heat of the day before. The city looked lovely by night. We passed a lovely part with beautiful fountains lit up with a variety of colored lights. The streets were crowded with people strolling about. We arrived at the Nevada Hotel, and Immediately had a drink with Jan and Paulette before we went up to the dining room at 11:00 PM, where we had some vino again. Everyone was tired after a long, long day, and a little silly and slaphappy at dinner.

Monday, July 16. At 9:30 AM we went on a sightseeing tour of the city. We drove through the beautiful park that had been planted by the British Duke of Wellington. (His portrait, done by the Spanish artist Goya, is still missing from the London Museum.) Went to the Generalife, the summer palace of the royalty. Magnificent gardens. On to the famous Alhambra, the most beautiful structure we have yet seen on this trip. Next, to a lace factory where they served us wine, all we could drink! Several little girls were working on the lace. One was a really beautiful doll. She had pierced ears, beautiful brown eyes, and hair piled up high on top of her head. Lots of lovely lace scarves.

We had an excellent lunch at the hotel and then left for Seville at about 2:30 PM. Passed numerous carts pulled by three or four mules hitched in single file. Also saw a number of goats and sheep, a few cattle and one herd of pigs. I have not seen a single wild animal on this whole trip, except for one lizard in Florence. Saw miles and miles of beautiful olive orchards, as far as the eye could see over the rolling hills. There were thick groves of tall trees in the river bottoms, trees that looked a little like aspen. The land here was mostly irrigated, as were the fields of potatoes and corn.

Arrive in Seville at about 7:30 PM, and the weather again was quite hot. Carlos took us to the Madrid hotel and no sooner had we entered the hotel when we got the word to load up again. It seems the hotel only had 30 rooms available. So, off to the Alfonso XIII, a real lovely luxury hotel. Beautiful dining room and a choice of menu, somewhat similar to the Palace hotel in Lucerne. Had a nice room overlooking the garden and a nice cool breeze coming in. The first night we dressed up, boarded the bus and drove to an outdoor restaurant. Had a typical Spanish dish - Bahia - delicious. After dinner we went to a nightclub and witnessed some real wild Flamenco dancing. Also had a glass of champagne. Enjoyed the show very much. Tuesday, July 17. Went sightseeing in the morning. Saw the 1929 Exposition buildings, then off to the Alcazar. It was even more beautiful than the Alhambra in Granada. Went through the third largest cathedral in Spain. In it was the tomb of Columbus, and supposedly also contained his bones. In it also was what was claimed to be the highest altar in the world, some 60 feet high. In the cathedral also was a huge 500-pound silver ornament and a one-ton candelabra.

I was terribly tired after lunch, so I stayed in the room, washed my hair and rested. Had food brought to the room. At night Ben and the group went to the bullfights. Jan and I stayed at the hotel and had a quiet dinner with champagne. At 11 PM the group returned from the fights and had their dinner. Some of the people were ill after seeing the fights, but most of them enjoyed it. Wednesday, July 18. Joyce and Curtis were very sick and had been ill all night. The doctor came to see Joyce. However, they will live, I guess. We left the hotel at 8:30 AM, an hour late. Drove for over an hour through miles and miles of cork oak trees, all planted in rows like an orchard. Lots of stonewalls and corrals. Saw some herds of pigs, also goats. Saw two storks, some palmetto trees. Passed a tall cart piled very high with hay, drawn by two oxen.

We are now driving through the province where tin and copper are mined, and the countryside is very rugged. Passed a large herd of bulls. Oleanders and crepe myrtle are in bloom in the villages we pass through. We see women doing their laundry in long washhouses.

At this time of the year a lot of grain is being threshed. It is a very primitive procedure, as we have also witnessed in other countries. First of all, horses and mules trample the grain on the ground, then men with pitchforks toss the straw and chaff up into the wind to separate it from the grain.

We drive on through countryside that has a lot of different trees. We see apple, mango, olive, oak, pine, figs, poplar and almond trees, Saw a lovely castle that had been turned into a hotel and summer resort sitting at the top of a mountain. Took a nap in the bus until we came to our AM rest stop at a very primitive little village. Some of the streets were laid out with square designs in stone. Many of the houses had whitewashed walls and geraniums in the window boxes. Very pretty. Stopped at Mario's restaurant in a little town by the name of Rosal de la Frontera. The little restaurant had dirt floors, and on some of the shelves on the wall were some caged hawks and falcons.

PORTUGAL. We have now arrived at the border. The Spanish authorities took our passports and stamped them, and now the Portuguese require us to fill out their forms. The Spaniards also checked our names against a "mug" list. Then the Portuguese collected our passports and then stamped them. Finally, after an hour we got across the border. It had been such a hot ride. I slept most of the way after crossing the border. Stopped at noon and had a good lunch of goat meat and fish, Port vino and native dishes. Passed Moorish walls and towers, rice paddles, cork oaks and pine trees. This has been a most hot and tiring day. Had an afternoon rest stop at a most dirty place.

Towards evening the temperature began to cool noticeably. We crossed the Tejas River, which was very wide and full, and arrived at Lisbon at about 7:30. It seemed like the most modern city in all of Europe. With its suburbs, Lisbon has a population of about one million. It was nice to see houses with green lawns again. Our hotel, the Mundial, is rather modern and quite nice. Had a good dinner In the dining room on the eighth floor with a good overview of the city. After dinner some of the group (who had rocks in their heads) took a "walk" with Ted, up and down cobblestone streets and hills (in high heels yet) at a nice brisk clip. I understand they are cured of evening strolls. I went to bed right after dinner.

Thursday, July 19. I slept until 10 AM and then had breakfast brought to the room. Have switched to tea. With this miserable European coffee, I don't know why I didn't do it sooner. Did some laundry and sent some out.

Had a grilled steak for lunch - it was very good. At 2:30 we all went on a city sightseeing tour. Saw the National Museum of Coaches where over 50 antique coaches were on display, many of them used by royalty. Then went through the St. Jerome Monastery and also the adjoining church where many of the Portuguese royalty and rulers have been buried. We drove around the bay and the yacht harbor and up to the top of a big hill overlooking the entire city. Everyone was tired and hot so the tour was cut short and we returned to the hotel. I had a cool drink and took a two-hour nap before dinner, then back to bed.

Friday, July 20. Slept till 9:30 and had breakfast sent to the room again. Our room is on the 6th floor and on the street side. It is absolutely the noisiest place we have been in yet, and it lasted all night long. Streetcars, busses, horses and carts rattling over the cobblestone streets, people yelling and roosters crowing. However, it didn't affect our sleeping too much.

I have never seen such confusion as in our dining rooms. There are so many waiters they seem to fall all over each other, and never seem to get their orders straight. They seem to think all Americans want is ham and eggs. (I'll admit, it'd taste pretty darn good, provided I could cook it myself.) The food here is certainly nothing to rave about. Ben and some of the others took an afternoon trip to the coast and Estoril, which is now a gathering place for retired royalty. They also visited some castles. Meanwhile, I stayed at the hotel and slept.

Saturday, July 21. We left Lisbon in the morning and drove through some lovely country. The weather is quite cool for a change and the driving was very comfortable. We made a stop at Batallia and went through the Benedictine Monastery of Batallia of St. Mary's. It is a Portuguese National Monument. There were at one time 500 monks in this monastery, but it has now dwindled to a mere 20. Don Pedro, the first king of Portugal, is buried in this church. A light is perpetually burning next to his casket and two guards are on duty at all times.

We had lunch at Fatima and stopped to see the huge shrine, the building of which was started in 1928. Arrived in Coimbra at about 5:30 PM. It has the oldest University in Portugal. We saw women washing clothes in the Mondego River. There are lots of vegetable gardens, and this appears to be the most verdant countryside we have yet seen in this southern part of Europe. We were required to turn in our passports at the Braganca hotel, where we stopped for the night. Joan is terribly ill and had a doctor come in and see her. She has a virus and cold, evidently brought on by the heat we have been through. Never have I seen anyone so chilled and feverish.

Took a walk before dinner. Saw women walking with huge loads of laundry, etc., on their heads and at the same time carrying other items in their arms. The streets are very narrow. Almost have to jump into doorways in order to avoid being hit by the wildly driven cars. This is a city with the most interesting variety of streets. Some are narrow, some are wide, some level, some rounded, some real steep.

Had a little better dinner tonight. Heavens, the meals have been so miserable and unappetizing in Portugal. Fish and veal, hard rolls and string beans, hard rice and french fries. Have not been eating much these days. I gave up on coffee and now drink tea. An occasional chocolate bar helps a lot. We have had good ice water in Portugal, so have indulged, but I guess it will be back to Agua Mineral, or natural con gas, or vino in Spain and France. Ugh! Had a very interesting walk with Ted and the group, up the steepest, narrowest, winding little cobblestone streets and steep flights of stairs. It was rather rough on the "fatties". We could peek into some of the homes, and saw lots of religious pictures hanging on the walls. There are a lot of cats roaming the streets and quite a few dirty children. We saw one tyke with only an undershirt on. We walked across the bridge to witness a big carnival that was in progress. The temperature is quite cold. Got to bed at 11:30 PM.

Sunday, July 22. The hotel forgot to call us this morning. Fortunately, Ben woke up 15 minutes before we were due for breakfast. Finally, we got off on the road, late as usual. Quite cool this morning. Very rugged country. Pine forests, eucalyptus trees, vineyards and olive orchards along the way. We also see cornfields and vegetable gardens, and we saw pine trees being tapped for tar. The pear trees here produce miniature pears that are very good. Yesterday we saw quite a few places that made red tiles for roofs and buildings. Today we see occasional truckloads of cork going by. We watched women filling huge jugs with water and then carrying them off on their heads. Some of the houses we pass have one or two pictures set in blue tiles on the outside walls.

Our rest stops in Portugal are really something for the books. Such primitive facilities, so broken down and dirty. One for the men and one for the women (which far outnumber the men). Sometimes there is only one for both men and women. We must be quite a sight - bedraggled looking tourists, standing in a long line, first on one foot, then the other, waiting for our turn at a smelly "John" that seldom flushed. Ah, me. Other smells that are beyond description are those emanating from the food shops along the narrow streets. Phew! Pastries sharing windows with files. Dressed chickens (uncovered, as is everything else) strung on a pole. Other meats in the sun in the window show case. Cheese, fish, olive oil and garlic, rancid, strong and nauseating smells.

Portuguese men are quite swarthy and usually good-looking. Businessmen wear dark suits, white shirts and ties.

Had a luncheon stop at the Hotel de Tourisme in Guarda, which is the highest city in Portugal. It sits high on a mountain where we could overlook a beautiful valley below. Despite the fact that we had veal again, it was the best lunch we have had for some time. The rest room was divine, one of the best we've had. How incongruous to find new and extremely modern buildings next to some that look, and probably are, centuries old.

On the roadside we pass some of the most fantastic looking rocks. They are very black, smooth and round, and of tremendous size. Some, where they are split open, are very white. Some are of odd and peculiar shapes, and some seem to be precariously balanced on top of each other. Very strange. And as always all over Europe, endless stone fences. The streets winding through the small towns are extremely narrow, and often Carlos has difficulty getting our bus through, often having to back up a few times in order to make it. But, with the help of the local police and volunteering citizens, we always get through. The only colors In these drab, dirty little towns are the bright flowers in the flower boxes, and in the pots on the balconies. It seems that at any stop we come to, people line up to stare at us and look us over.

Well, here we are at the border. It takes longer to get across the Portuguese border, either way, than all the other countries added together. Had to fill out another form like we did coming in. Such a long wait!

SPAIN. Now we are waiting on the Spanish side, and it is hot again. It always is, when we have a long wait in the bus. We will probably be very late arriving at our hotel. It seems they took down a description of everyone's picture in their passports. As soon as we are on our way again in Spain the landscape is thick with oak trees. We see quite a few cattle and fields of grain. Sheaves are piled in huge stacks and harvesting is in progress. There are a few threshing machines, but mostly it is done by the old, primitive method of oxen or mules trampling the grain on the ground, or dragging a sled-like contraption over the grain. Saw a lot of oxen, most of them pulling carts piled high with hay. We see more cattle here than we have seen on our entire trip.

We crossed the River Tornes and arrived in Salamanca at 5:30 PM. The river seemed quite shallow and had several overflows in which people were wading and swimming. Salamanca is the oldest university town in Spain. We have an interesting view from our window overlooking the steeples of a large cathedral. Although the rest of the buildings are now in shadow, the sun is still shining on the church domes. Thousands of swallows are flitting madly about. Never have I seen so many at one time. I expect one to fly into our open window at any time. We are on the 4th floor (actually, the 5th floor, since in Europe the 1st floor is the one above the ground floor) and can look out over many red-tiled roofs, and over a high stone fence into a garden where several men in black robes and white robes are sitting together and walking around. People here, as in Naples, hang their laundry out the windows and across the streets. They seem to love to display it as a sign of wealth. Out in the countryside we passed through, the laundry was often draped over rocks and bushes to dry.

Took a stroll to the Plaza Major at night. It is quite large, with many shops, sidewalk cafes and apartments all around.

Monday, July 23. It is 9:30 AM and we are late as usual in taking off. We are now on our way to Madrid and are traveling over some quite flat country with a lot of grain fields. After a while we start climbing a bit and the landscape suddenly changes to one covered with huge oak trees and groves of tall poplars here and there. Such abrupt changes.

Finally we arrive in Avila, the highest city in Spain. It is a most remarkable medieval looking town surrounded by a very high wall with 89 huge towers and seven gates into the city. These walls were built between the 11th and 12th centuries, and as such are still the best preserved in the country. We can't get the bus inside the city, since the gates are too small. We can see some storks on top of the towers, and saw two with a nest. Since we couldn't drive in, we just parked the bus outside the gate and took a short walk into part of the city. Here we had a lunch that was not too great, except for the cherries and ice cream.

We arrived in Madrid at 4:30 PM. It is a lovely city, out in the plains, and has a population of about three million. When we arrived at the Plaza Hotel we went to the bar and had a lemonade while we waited for our room to be made up. Our room is large, contains a sofa, a coffee table and a desk, but there is no air conditioning. We are on the 15th floor, and have a beautiful view of the city and can see to the plains beyond the outskirts of the city, and even to the mountains in the distance. Immediately across the street is a lovely park.

At 5:30 we took a jaunt with Ted to locate some of the stores and shopping places in the immediate area. We left Ted and I bought a few things for Kim. Got some ice cream and then stopped at a sidewalk cafe for coffee. Also strolled through an art exhibit. Stores are open from 9 AM to 1:30 PM, then from 4 to 7:30 PM. Were back at the hotel at 8 PM, in time to change and ready for dinner at 9 PM. Ted, Carlos, Paulette, Linda and Joan sat at the table with us. We had champagne, and an excellent dinner for a change. Everyone seemed happy.

Took a little stroll through the park after dinner. It is still hot. Back at the hotel, we took the elevator to the 26th floor to the roof gardens to see the big swimming pool, and view the lights of the city. The water in the pool seemed awfully green, I guess they don't use chlorine like we do. After getting back to the room at about midnight I did some laundering and washed my hair.

Tuesday, July 24. After breakfast, we took a taxi to the El Prado, that most wonderful Art Museum. It has a marvelous collection of paintings by Spanish artists such as Goya, El Greco, Valesquez, and of course, from any number of other countries as well. We were in there for two and a half hours but still didn't see it all.

After lunch we left for Toledo at about 2:30. It is very hot. With its ancient walls, towers, castles and the Tajus River, Toledo makes for a very picturesque city. We could see fish swimming in the river below. Went to a factory and watched them working on Toledo steel items (knives, etc.) with gold leaf inlay. Very beautiful and very expensive. We left the bus and hiked for what seemed miles down some very narrow cobblestone streets to the Toledo cathedral. It had beautiful altars, etc., ornately carved, exquisite stained glass windows and another huge gold and silver ornament similar to the one we saw in Seville. From there we wandered over to El Greco's house. In the process we lost four people from our group, but finally found them back where we had gotten out of the bus. So we were late getting started back to Madrid, and did not arrive there until 8:20 PM or so. On the way back we sang Spanish songs with Hector and Father Valencia leading the chorus. What a lovely voice the Father has!

Back at the hotel, fast showers and out to a restaurant for dinner, the "Corral de la Moreria." It was air conditioned and quite cold. I had not brought a sweater along, and in a few minutes the headwaiter came up with a white tablecloth and draped It over my shoulders. Soon quite a few of the rest of the party were also draped. Had an excellent dinner, which included some thick steaks. At 11:45 the floorshow started. Our table was right next to the tiny stage. There were four girls, two guitarists, two male singers and two male dancers. They were doing flamenco dances and singing gypsy songs. Such clapping and heel tapping. Such pained expressions when they sing and dance! As they danced and twirled a green rose came flying through the air and went into orbit from the head of one of the dancing girls and Ben happened to catch it in mid air. He wanted to keep it as a souvenir, but she insisted on having it back.

Wednesday, July 25. Went on a city sightseeing tour in the morning. The University of Madrid has 60,000 students and a Soccer Stadium that seats 150,000, the largest in Europe, they claim. We went back to the hotel for lunch and after lunch we repacked our things, then at 5 PM we were off to the bullfights, which started at 6 PM sharp. This show did not have professional performers, nor were the fights nearly as colorful and exciting as the ones we saw in Mexico City a few years ago. The fifth fight was terrible. The matador lost his cape several times, as well as his sword, and had to make five attempts before he could finally kill the bull. Poor bull! The sixth and last fight, in which the matador was from

Mexico, was pretty good, but the matador was not awarded an ear.

When we got back to the hotel, we had another good dinner, then went to bed.

Thursday, July 26. Up at 6:00 AM. The Colonel and Mrs. Byrd are flying home to Orlando today. (The Colonel had fallen and hurt his hip at the Alcazar in Seville.) The Cespedos left our group and are going back to Barcelona. The two sisters are taking a train to Paris from here. We leave at 8:00 AM and have one of the longest drives of our trip ahead of us. Had our morning rest stop in the mountains and the air is quite cool and clear. We are driving through some pretty countryside of rolling hills, of cypress trees, and some oaks. We also pass by miles and miles of grain fields. The harvesting is very primitive. The grain is cut by hand with sickles, and then tied into sheaves, also by hand. Women are working In the fields, and we also see them washing clothes in the rivers. Passed through many small villages, some of which are almost in ruins. Arrived at Burgos. Visited the Principe cathedral. Very beautiful. Saw where El Cid and his wife were buried. Had lunch at the El Cid Hotel, a very pretty place. Beautiful flower gardens in front, and lots of roses. Had Bahia again for lunch, but it was very good, delicious meat instead of chicken. Took a stroll through the flower gardens, then back into the bus.

Slept for two hours in a bumpy bus and had a bad headache when I woke. We are traveling through part of the Pyrenees Mountains. They are very rugged and very green, and just beautiful. We are now in the heart of the Basque country and find the houses are better looking than in the previous villages, and the hostels are very pretty and look like Tyrolean houses. Flowers everywhere and everything very green. Everything looks much more prosperous than most other parts of Spain. Ted says the Basques are the most industrious and outstanding of all the peoples in Spain. Engineers, architects, etc., come to this part of the country.

The clouds are hanging low and it is very cool and pleasant. Carlos is really pushing it in driving down these winding mountain roads. We skipped our PM rest stop, and arrived at the Hispana Americano Hotel in San Sebastian at 6:00 PM. Our room was the worst of the entire trip. It was small and the bed was bumpy. The floor was not quite on the level and there was also a terrible odor from the nearby canal. We both felt somewhat tired and bushed and went to bed without having dinner. Slept until 10 PM, when our bags were finally delivered to our room. Ted had to deliver most of them. Took a shower and back to bed.

Friday, July 27. It was raining when we woke up. San Sebastian is a summer resort on the ocean, having a population of about 100,000 in the winter and about 200,000 in the summer. It appears to have quite a bit of industry also. It was quite refreshing to see brightly painted new houses, many of which are in the Tyrolean architecture, very pretty with lovely gardens.

We left San Sebastian at about 8:10 AM and the weather was cool and cloudy most of the morning.

FRANCE. Crossed into France without having much of a wait at the border. We are told that 2/5 of all the tillable land in France is planted in grapes. We arrived at Biarritz, where Father Valencia left us. Some of the homes here are quite lovely. Ted says a lot of bootleggers live here, bootlegging wine across the border. He says that half the population are smugglers, and the other half are police trying to catch them.

We have driven through miles and miles of pine forest, and see some of these trees being tapped for tar. It is a lovely countryside. Soon we are out of the mountains. When we came to our morning rest stop the place would not let us use their rest rooms. The bus stopped at another crummy place later for those who were really desperate, but the rest of us waited until we arrived at Bordeau. Here we had a perfectly marvelous lunch at the Cafe de Bordeau, the best meal and wine we have had in ages, (since Madrid.) The men all wear black berets, and some of the women do too.

Drove on through a very lovely countryside that had lots of rolling hills, lots of trees and vineyards, and the houses have that Spanish look again. The land is very fertile and we see the grain fields being harvested with more modern machinery, such as combines and tractors. Our afternoon rest stop was at Angouleme. This is where Joan of Arc talked to the University Regents about her plans to save France, and the nearby area is where the Battle of Orleans was fought.

Arrived at Poitiers at about 7:15 PM and checked in at the Hotel de France. It is not much of a hotel on the outside, but very nice inside. We have a nice spacious room with a big bath, but, as always, we have to ask for the soap. In San Sebastian we were even asked to pay for the soap, so we used up what we had and didn't get any. Had an excellent bed here. Went for a walk in the evening. The Chamber of Commerce was still open so we stopped in to see what they had. Two Frenchmen loaded us up with pamphlets and we even bought two of their beautiful posters for souvenirs.

Saturday, July 28. Were up early at 6:30 and off before 8 AM. Drove through the beautiful Loire Valley and along the Loire River. There are Chateaus everywhere, and it is about the loveliest countryside I've ever seen. Very fertile valley, beautiful big trees, extremely tall poplars and lovely flowers everywhere. Most of the houses were built of stone, had slate roofs, and lots of chimneys visible. Drove through Tours and on to Biols. We were given a tour of the outstanding Biols Chateau, called the "Court of the Kings of France." Had an English-speaking guide. Murder! He looked like an old riverboat captain, and only Paulette could understand him.

After the tour we walked to our designated restaurant for lunch, which was very good. Then back to the bus and on to Chartres. Had a nap on the bus before we arrived at the famous Chartres cathedral. Saw its beautiful stained glass windows, reputed to be the most outstanding works of art in stained glass in the world.

Arrived in Paris at 6:00 PM and checked in at the Grande Hotel. Had a letter waiting. Our room is very nice, has a balcony, a huge bath, and a real fireplace with a marble mantle. It is an old hotel, but has a very strategic downtown location, overlooking the lovely old Opera House. Had a light lunch at a self-service place across the street from the hotel, since we weren't particularly hungry. Ted had told us on the bus coming in to Paris that we were required to eat at least one $4.00 meal a day at the hotel we were staying at, which was news to us, and some of us refused. Ted is very hurt and angry (he probably gets a rake-off from the hotel.) So we had a round with Ted and the hotel manager, and Ted says we will probably be transferred to some hole in the wall across the river, or some such place. So far we haven't moved. Took a sightseeing tour of Paris by night. Many lights and very pretty.

Sunday, July 29. (By this time Henrie was tired and exhausted from the long trip, and she asked me, Ben, to take over the chore of taking notes, so the remainder are my notes.)

This morning we went on a city tour, and for the first time we had an English-speaking guide whom we could understand. We went to the Sacred Heart Cathedral, very white and beautiful, in the Montmartre district. Nearby we saw a number of French artists displaying their paintings set up on the sidewalks. The paintings looked very good, but unfortunately we did not have enough time to examine them in detail. We next drove to the theatre district, and from there on to the famous Notre Dame Cathedral, which is situated on an island, the Isle de France. The crowds were overwhelming and soon we got separated from the guide and were lost from the group for a while. We walked to the edge of the Seine River and into the park behind Notre Dame and saw some beautiful modern tour ships on the river.

That night we went to the Lido night club (extra, at our own expense) and had an excellent dinner and saw an outstanding show. We noticed Ed Sullivan and a group sitting at a table nearby, and I went over to shake his hand as one American to another and talked to him for a while. Sullivan later signed up one of the acts, a fellow who had the knack of picking someone's pocket almost unnoticed while innocently standing in front of them engaged in an ongoing conversation. Ted was also at this dinner with us, and by this time we had made peace and he had given up the idea of making us have our dinners at the hotel.

Monday, July 30. This morning we drove to the Versailles Palace, about 30 miles out of Paris. The forest surrounding the area was beautiful. We saw the Trianon Garden houses of Marie Antoinette. The palace grounds were large barren cobblestone yards, but the gardens behind the Versailles Palace were outstandingly beautiful and a wonder to behold. We went through the palace itself and saw the Hall of Mirrors, the desk where the Treaty of Versailles was signed, and the window where Marie Antoinette stood and from which she proclaimed one of history's most famous boo-boos: "Why not let them eat cake?" Also saw many paintings of Napoleon here several by Jacques Louis David.

On the way back, Henrie and I got off the bus at the Eiffel Tower. We took the elevator all the way to the top, took in the lovely view and took a number of pictures. We then went down to the Eiffel Tower Restaurant (about a third of the way up) and had one of the best dinners we have had on the entire trip. We then walked to the Arc de Triumph about a mile away, took some more pictures, then walked up the Champs de Elysees to our hotel.

After dinner we went to the Follies Bergler, after having a most difficult time trying to catch a taxi. Several others of our group also went. We all sat in a box on the left hand side of the stage and were close enough to have some of the showgirls kiss Hector. The show was simply gorgeous. Wonderful sets, wonderful girls. They change the show completely once a year.

Tuesday, July 31. Henrie and I, along with Elly and Carol, took a taxi to the Louvre. My return trip to the Museum was even more interesting than when I had been there seven years earlier. I took special note of the whole room full of 22 large Rubens paintings. I also noted that the Mona Lisa now had a protective glass covering, and further, that it had been reworked, so that the cracks were now gone and It had a strange greenish tint. Henrie, by this time, was getting very tired and somewhat sick. That night I took a walk through the Tulleries Gardens, while she stayed at the hotel.

Wednesday, August 1. In the morning I walked to the Place de Concord for a while, then back to the hotel and did some packing. American Express was located across the street, and I shipped a large box of excess items on its way home.

That afternoon we left the hotel and took a bus to the Orly Airport, about 20 miles out of Paris. On arriving we discovered that Ted had not confirmed our airline reservations, as he claimed he had done. Luckily, and nevertheless, we still got on the same plane for which we had tickets and left at 4:00 PM. The food and the coffee were first class American again!

We arrived in New York at 7:30 PM, and had no problem at customs, nor did we have to pay any duty on items. Ted was also to have confirmed our Eastern Airline tickets from New York to Miami. When we checked at the Eastern counter, we found out just what we had already suspected, namely that Eastern had been on strike for weeks. Again, luckily, we obtained seats on National Airlines, and left only 15 minutes later than we would have had we been on the Eastern flight. However, we still had to wait until 9:30 at the airport, and it was beastly hot. We arrived in Miami at 11:30 PM, and from there took an airport limousine to home, sweet home.

Postscript

In reflecting on this major six-week adventure in our lives, I feel compelled to highlight some of the interesting characters that were part of this diverse group with whom we traveled. I am writing this codicil some 29 years after the event.

We have been on a number of other similar tours to Europe and elsewhere, but none of them were of six weeks duration, nor was there ever a group with whom we became so intimately acquainted and chummy as we did with this particular assembly. None ever left such a permanent impression on us as did this motley crew of 44 with whom we traveled during the summer of 1962.

There was Colonel R.L. Byrd and his recent bride of 75, from St. Petersberg, Florida. The colonel was a trim 90 years of age, six foot tall, ramrod straight and every inch the military prototype. He was proud to tell us that he had taken part in the famous charge up San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba during the War against Spain in 1898. He had been a military engineer and participated In the building of the Panama Canal. He had traveled much, been in any number of other episodes in South Africa and elsewhere, and had distinguished himself during service in World War 1. Now he wanted to show his new bride some of the highlights of Europe, especially the Alhambra, in Granada, Spain. His wife, who had been a nurse all her life, was more concerned about getting the crotchety old Colonel back home all in one piece than she was about seeing Europe. Poor Colonel! He carried his wallet and his military credentials (of which he was so proud) in his hip pocket. While we were all on a tour and viewing the inside wonders of St. Peters Cathedral in Rome, Italy, some pickpocket lifted his wallet, including all of his most valuable papers. When we finally got to Seville and the famous Alcazar, unfortunately the colonel missed a step-down in the courtyard and fell, breaking his hip. He and his wife then left the tour and flew back to the United States.

Then there was Paulette Siegrist and her most attractive 17-year-old daughter Linda, from Chicago. Linda was not only pretty but extremely intelligent and well informed for her age. Paulette had been married twice, now in her late thirties, was divorced. Paulette was a most jovial and interesting character, always the life of the party, and Henrie and I probably spent more time with these two than any other individuals on this trip.

To get an idea of Paulette's personality, I recall a conversation early in our tour. She was telling us about her early childhood when they were living in a wealthy neighborhood in Miami Beach in the 1920's. Her father, she said, was a hot-tempered Lebanese, and her mother was French. Since her father was loaded with money, she was chauffeur-driven to school in a limousine, she recalled. "I presume your dad was in real estate?" I asked. "Hell, no!" she replied with a loud belly-laugh, "He was a bootlegger!" That was her typical style. When we all took a train from Rome to Genoa, a group of us were gathered in a compartment. Indulging in telling jokes, clean, ribald, and otherwise. Paulette's repertoire was not only the most voluminous but also the most hilarious, and I cannot ever remember laughing as hard and repeatedly as I did on this particular train ride along the rocky western coast of Italy. Also close to us was a Mrs. Jan McClelland with her two teenage sons, Donald, 19, and Curtiss, 13. The latter, although barely a teenager, already seemed to have a proclivity for beer and wine, and his mother did little to discourage him. Another character in our group was a schoolteacher from Miami by the name of Joan Reitsma. She was 29, rather a large woman and seemed to have a natural inclination to take charge of the young people on the tour. This included the McClelland boys, whether they liked it or not. Evidently Joan found it hard to shake her schoolteacher habits and training, even on vacation.

Included in the tour were about seven or eight Mexicans, and although not close to us, this group too had some Interesting characters. Some of the names I recall were Mr. & Mrs. Carlos Cespedes, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nunez, and Hector Hurtado and his mother Maria Hurtado. Of these, Hector, a short, stocky fellow, was the most outstanding. He was surprisingly well educated, well versed in the arts and literature, and seemed to know his way around. His favorite gambit was to take a group on a walking tour when we would come to a new city, and half the time he would get lost. But he was witty and entertaining and reminded me of the Mexican actor by the name of Cantinflas, who played the clown and valet in the movie Around the World in 80 Days. Also in that group was a handsome young Spanish priest by the name of Father Luis Valencia. He was the kind of likeable scatter train who couldn't keep his earthly affairs, such as visas, etc., straight, but he more than compensated for this with his lovely voice and personality, and often led the sing songs in the bus, or even gave us solo renditions.

Judge Charles Fortier was a frail old man in his late sixties. He was sort of a loner, interested in exploring the byways and highways of life, but he hated the hypocrisies of Christian churches, and he would prefer to sit in the bus or walk the streets rather than go inside of one in the numerous tours of the great churches and cathedrals that were a major part of this tour. I had many interesting conversations with him, and although at that time I was merely indifferent (not hostile) to Christianity, I learned much from him. About a year after we were all back home, Judge Fortier sent me a complete set of Colonel Robert Ingersoll's twelve books on religion, except for Volume One, which was missing. He also sent me a nice letter, saying that he wanted to donate these books to me, because I was probably the only person that had enough sense to understand them! Thank you, Judge.

Another recently married but elderly couple (they were in their sixties) on this tour was Mr. & Mrs. Frank Bachmann from Orlando, Florida. Poor man! He had latched on to an extremely jealous wife, and no matter what he did she would publicly accuse him of flirting with the younger girls, which he was not. I remember one typical incident when we were on a boat on our way to Capri. The poor fellow was innocently standing at the rail watching the Mediterranean, and not too far away doing the same was our schoolteacher, Joan Reitsma. Up comes his wife from behind and accuses him of finding the back of Joan's calves more interesting than the view of Capri. I felt sorry for him. I wonder how long they stayed married.

Also in our tour was an Italian grandmother by the name of Mary Criscuola. She and her parents had left Italy for the United States when Mary was a little girl of 5. Now, in her early seventies, she so eagerly wanted to see her native Italy again before she died. As we neared the Italian border she was happily singing Italian songs, such as Marie! Marie! and in a high state of anticipation and excitement. Once in Italy, the first thing that happened to her was that some pickpocket stole her purse and all the money she had with her. We all felt so sorry for her. She was completely disillusioned and heartbroken.

There were a number of other interesting people in this tour, including a number of pretty young girls, of which Eleanor Larson, a statuesque blonde of Swedish ancestry was perhaps the most impressive (in my opinion). Also, in this category were a number of young schoolteachers, of which I remember the names of Betty Bollinger and Carol Heunann.

Also, before I leave this motley crew, I must mention our first tour leader (he was later replaced by another towards the end of the trip.) His name was Herr Heinz Biedermann, a young fellow from Germany, age 33. He was quite an intellectual, and as we would approach the next city on our tour he would give us the historical background of the place over the bus audio system. Usually the preamble would start with the Romans. As we approached Vienna, "The Romans first built a military garrison here which they named Vindobona because the ample vineyards." He was an interesting racont and I must say that I enjoyed his lectures and learned much. In fact, his spotlight on the Roman history in beginnings of the evolving European culture more than anything stimulated in me an enduring interest in, and appreciation of, the Ancient Romans.

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Milestone Thirty-Six: European Tour: Six Weeks and Eleven Countries

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Against the Evil Tide - 38

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Milestone Thirty-Seven: Six Years with the John Birch Society 1963-1969

When I finished reading the German edition of Hitler's Mein Kampf in 1938, my dad asked me if I had understood what I had read. I said, yes, I believe I understand it fairly well. He was surprised on two counts. First, that I could read such a lengthy book in German in the first place, since I had had very little formal instruction in German; and secondly, that I could comprehend such a complex political document, which he had also read, and much of which, he confessed, escaped him. In any case, having read this historical document at the age of 20, it greatly influenced my future outlook on life as a whole, and especially on the political structure of the world. In particular, it brought home to me the overwhelming fact that the Jews controlled the world, and that they were now, and had been for centuries, our most dangerous and sinister enemies. It was a fact of life that I had learned, and although I pursued it in further detail for the rest of my days, this fundamental fact remained.

Just before World War II broke out on the first of September 1939, I had been preparing to migrate to Germany and study engineering at the University of Heidelberg, and hopefully settle in Germany permanently. The outbreak of the war precluded that and as I have already chronicled previously, I entered the University of Saskatchewan instead, and in the final year graduated with a B.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Manitoba in 1943. At this point, as the war ground on, I was anxiously watching the turn of events, hoping Germany would win, and at the same time, facing the inevitable, I began to become more and more interested in the United States as the land of my future.

As I have also reviewed earlier, I did migrate to the United States in 1945, and whereas my enthusiasm for political and ideological causes were now subdued and submerged (not changed) into the background, I looked forward to building for myself the good life in America, the land of the boundless future. I became more or less apolitical, no longer interested in pursuing lost causes, but more interested in constructively building a future home here in America. My perception of who ran America at that time was still somewhat naive, although I knew the Jews had most of the money, and controlled the press. I believed that, still, the government and our politics, were in the hands of good "Americans", but I wasn't too sure. The fact that we were now (supposedly) opposed to communism allayed my fears and suspicions to a certain extent, but why was our government making so many stupid moves? Anyway, for the next decade or so I paid little attention to the political events in America and concentrated on my family affairs, building up my business, having a nice home and looking forward to an unclouded future. After all, I lived in America, the Land of Promise. What more could anyone ask?

This idyllic, but naive, outlook became somewhat troubled by about 1953 and 1954 when Senator Joseph McCarthy began pointing the finger, naming names and flushing out some of the communists in the State Department and various other agencies of the government. What especially bothered me was the vehemence with which he was attacked by the news media for doing what I considered was the duty of any patriotic citizen. I even had a few heated arguments about it with some people with whom I discussed the McCarthy episode. However, no matter, I wasn't going to lose any sleep over it, and went about my business.

Before I leave the McCarthy uproar, I want to make it clear that I did not then, and do not now, unequivocally support Senator McCarthy's position, nor his approach to a very serious problem, namely the worldwide Jewish conspiracy called communism. In fact, Senator McCarthy remains a puzzle to me to this very day. Like the Birch Society, McCarthy blamed all the evils on "the communists", meanwhile leaving the real cause, the centuries-old Jewish network that produced and manipulated the communist conspiracy, completely unscathed. For a man who was privy to all the information that was available to McCarthy, or any other senator, to then completely ignore the Jews that were behind all the evils of the world, is inconceivable. Why did he stick his neck out to attack communism and not point the finger at the Jews, the real villains behind it all? This I can't understand. Further, to compound it, he had two obstreperous and freewheeling young Jewish attorneys as the key investigators on his staff, namely Roy Cohen and David Schine. This is like putting the fox in charge of the henhouse. Certainly McCarthy didn't lack guts, as he proved by his illustrious war record. Certainly he had the information about the Jews available to him, since most of his lists of communists were Jews. In fact, Kehilla honcho Bernard Baruch pointed this out to him and severely took him to task for it. So why didn't he put two and two together? I'll never know. After thoroughly destroying him through their massive propaganda machinery, the Jews finally put McCarthy out of the way by giving him a shot of hepatitis when he had entered the hospital for nothing more than a severe cold. So by 1957 McCarthy was dead at the age of 48, thoroughly discredited and killed by the Jews. In fact, his name entered the national vocabulary as a man who unfairly slandered poor innocent people, such as the communists in government.

As I said, I went about my business. The next incident that raised my hackles was when in 1957 the Eisenhower administration brought in a huge contingent of army troops to force integration of the Little Rock, Arkansas, High School. This in the face of violent opposition from the White population, and seemingly, even from the then Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus. Now, knowing how the Jews usually set up a false stooge in the opposition camp, I strongly suspect that the governor was a phony, in cooperation with the conspiracy to facilitate the sellout. (See the Phony Fight Ruse, P. 120 of Expanding Creativity.) About this time, 1957, I was deeply engrossed in the electric can opener business and by 1958 in making a major move to the State of Florida, and politics and conspiracies were not uppermost in my mind. By 1961 however, another incident jarred my consciousness and that was when under the confused and disjointed Kennedy boys the United States government again brought in a major contingent of 20,000 troops to Oxford, Mississippi to put one lone desultory nigger by the name of James Meredith into the University of Mississippi, by using sheer brute military force against its own citizens.

A year later, 1962, Governor George Wallace began attracting my attention when he "heroically" stood in the schoolhouse door in Alabama and proclaimed, "Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever!" Little did I then know that he, too, was a phony, but it did arouse my racial awareness and pride. I was becoming more politically aware and racially excited. No longer did I feel that everything "was alright" in America. I began to revive my memories of Hitler and his racial creed.

When President John Kennedy was publicly assassinated on November 22 of 1963, I became even more alarmed and I immediately smelled a rat. Instinctively I sensed that this was a set-up, that Lee Harvey Oswald was neither the lone gunman nor the real culprit that the press so vociferously proclaimed. It was at this point that I felt that I had to do something, I had to get involved. I had previously read in the press that Bobby Kennedy, as Attorney General, had publicly denounced the John Birch Society. I thought that rather strange, but hating just about everything the Kennedys stood for, I concluded that if Bobby went out of his way to denounce the Birch Society, there must be something good about it, and anyway, the Birch Society was against communism. At this time there was a group In Ft. Lauderdale that was pushing "Operation Alert", and I remembered that somewhere I had saved their phone number. I called the number, and asked them if they were part of the John Birch Society. A woman answered cautiously, said no, but they could put me in touch. I said, fine, I want to find out about them. Next thing I knew I received a telephone call from a man by the name of Jim Cochrane, a member of the Pompano Beach chapter, and he came over to my house to tell me all about the John Birch Society. The first thing he did was play Tom Anderson's phonograph record, "Bi-partisan Treason". I was immediately impressed. Tom Anderson, in his homespun drawl, nevertheless eloquently made the point that both parties, the Republicans and the Democrats were alike as two peas in a pod, and both collaborated and were manipulated by the communists to sell this country out to communist Russia. I signed up immediately and eagerly awaited our first "chapter" meeting.

It was held at the home of Cranford Sproul in Pompano Beach. He was the "chapter leader" and conducted the proceedings. The routine, which was to be followed by many future meetings went something like this. The meeting opened with a Pledge of Allegiance to the flag, which stood in one corner of the room. It was followed by an invocation, or prayer, given either by the chapter leader or one of the members. Next followed a discussion of the present month's J.B.S. Bulletin and whatever items in the news were of current interest, and/or whatever projects the Society or the local groups were promoting. The meeting ended with another prayer, or benediction, as it was called. This was then followed by a social hour, during which the hostess of the meeting usually served coffee and cookies, or some similar refreshments.

Cranford Sproul was an architect by profession. He was a solemn, cautious man. When I attended those first meetings, which were held monthly and rotated to the homes of the different members, I was impressed by the seeming conspiracy-like atmosphere, as if we were in some danger of being rounded up at any time and put into an internment camp. Cranford hinted at certain passages of Robert Welch's in the latest bulletin that could mean that our postal mailings might soon be curtailed and that our means of communicating abridged. After a few meetings, Cranford Sproul, without giving a specific reason, resigned as chapter leader and as a member. It sounded like he had a more important mission to perform and was going underground. We must remember that this was back in 1963-64, some twenty-five years ago. It seemed to me even from the beginning of my membership that the members were overly secret to the point of being paranoid, and I pointed this out to them. I took the position that if we were going to expand we should be more public and more open. What was there to fear?

As soon as Cran Sproul resigned, Jim Cochrane, one of the members of the group, volunteered to take over as chapter leader, and we carried on. I avidly read and studied all of the J.B.S. literature. The society was founded in 1958 by Robert Welch, the scion of a candy manufacturing company. He had called together a group of twelve leading conservatives, most of which were well-heeled millionaires, to a secret enclave and gave them a concentrated two day lecture on the menace and spread of communism. These lectures were complied into what was called the Blue Book, and it constituted the basic bible of the John Birch Society.

I studied the Blue Book and was impressed and alarmed at the powerful inroads communism had made on the government of the United States, on the governments of the so-called "free" countries of the world, and the takeover of the numerous so-called "Iron-curtain" countries. In fact, I was alarmed at the rapid communist takeover of the total societies and peoples of the world! Something had to be done! In his Blue Book, I noted, however, that Robert Welch scrupulously avoided any mention of the Jewish participation in this whole conspiracy, something that Hitler had dramatically pointed out. I wondered why. Oh, well, no matter. Perhaps Welch had found a better way of exposing communism by avoiding the dangerous charge of being anti-Semitic, and could do it more expeditiously by sneaking in through a backdoor approach. So it was explained to me. In any case, it was pointed out emphatically that we must never succumb to the dangerous entrapment of being accused of anti-Semitism, nor any kind of racism, for that matter. Hitler and Nazism were as bad as Stalin and communism, both being the extreme wings of tyranny and dictatorship. The only difference was that the Nazis were on the extreme right and the communists represented the extreme left wing. Both were to be shunned, and we Birchers wanted to stay in the moderate and modest middle, good fellows that we were.

Although I knew better, I went along with this line of approach, rationalizing that at least here was a compatible, concerned group that was willing to do something, and probably, were the only game in town, in terms of the vernacular. I wanted to do something meaningful, and soon I went all out to do my part. A few months later, by March of 1964, I closed my real estate office in Pompano Beach and devoted practically full time to promoting the activities of the John Birch Society. At this time the Society had several branch activities going. It had a bookstore in Ft. Lauderdale that had a large selection of books, leaflets and sundry materials available for sale. It also sponsored a Speaker's Bureau, called the Fact Finder's Forum, which had been featuring speakers such as William F. Buckley, and others, who were prominent in "conservative" circles. Some of these speakers were members of the Birch Society and directly on their staff, others were not. Just about at the time I joined towards the end of their 1963-64 Winter Season, Fact Finders Forum was ready to close up shop for lack of leadership willing to do the arduous work of carrying on. I considered this a catastrophe for our "cause, something that I could not let happen. I volunteered to take over, and in no time at all I found myself to be chairman. They had found a patsy.

I remained chairman for three seasons. We would meet in the large dining room on the second floor of the old Governor's Club Hotel in downtown Ft. Lauderdale for a dinner session and a speech, the affair usually starting at 8:00 PM. After a social gathering at the bar and a good dinner, the key speaker would then ventilate some major issue of alarm, relating in scholarly detail how the communist traitors in government and elsewhere were selling the United States out to the communists. Of course, there was no lack of issues to belabor, but never would they ever mention the Jewish involvement behind the communist conspiracy, nor was the issue of race ever brought up. Both these subjects were strictly taboo, I soon found out. In fact, some of the speakers the JBS had on their roster were themselves niggers or Jews. It was always a case of deplore and lament, of listening to an endless retinue of bad news, but never presenting a meaningful solution to the multitude of problems raked up. Unfortunately, I did not understand then what I understand now, namely, that the John Birch Society was instigated by the Jewish conspiracy itself in order to confuse the goyim with endless no-win projects and to run interference for the Jews.

Among the speakers I remember having on my programs were such notables as Tom Anderson, Editor and majority owner of "Farm and Ranch Magazine" and also one of the key people on the JBS Board of Directors; G. Edward Griffin, a very personable young fellow and an excellent speaker, who also authored a number of books, among them the "The Great Prison Break", (about the Supreme Court), "The Fearful Master", (about the United Nations), "World Without Cancer", and several others. Some twelve years later I wrote him a critical letter about the cancer book, a complete copy of which can be found In THE KLASSEN LETTERS, Vol. II, starting on page 104. Other speakers were Cleon

Skousen, a big wheel in the Mormon Church and author of "The Naked Communist" and a few other books. I remember picking him up at the Palm Beach airport and driving him to the Governor's Club Hotel, a distance of about 40 miles. During the ride, I tried to involve him in a conversation about the Jews, implying that they were really behind communism and most of our other ills. I also remember how circumspect he was about the subject, trying to deflect the issue with such pointless questions as, "Who are the Jews?" implying that they were only some nebulous religious group with no particular cohesion. What a lie! Some others were Alan Stang, a Jew, and Julia Brown, a negress. Also on my program at the time were T. Coleman Andrews, Director of Internal Revenue during the Eisenhower administration; Willis Stone, author and founder of the Liberty Amendment movement; and James Kilpatrick, political columnist and Editor of the Union Leader, Manchester, N.H. I will have more to say about Mr. Kilpatrick later.

During the third session of my tenure I was influenced to change the venue from dinners at the Governor's Club Hotel to having meetings in a large auditorium in a high school in downtown Ft. Lauderdale. Some of the members complained that the price of the dinners was too high and we could probably have more people attend our lectures and hear our message of gloom and doom if they could attend without having to pay the additional price of the dinner. I went along with this approach and thought I would try it. However, it did not turn out to be productive. Most of the membership had enjoyed the fellowship of the social hour and the dinner, and we had fewer than the usual 200 members attend in the new setting. The routine procedure had been to meet, eat and retreat, and evidently the majority of the Birch members liked it that way.

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The year was 1964, and we "conservatives" felt ever so fortunate that our great conservative leader, Barry Goldwater, was running as a candidate for the presidency of the United States. "Goldwater for President" offices soon sprang up in Pompano Beach, in Ft. Lauderdale, in Boynton Beach, and elsewhere, mostly under the auspices of Birchers and/or cohorts. The Pompano Beach office was manned by Fletcher Riley, Tom and Marge Herrington, Cranford Sproul and a number of other supporters. I was soon caught up in the campaign, determined to do my part. It was during this campaign that I met up with Austin Davis, a young contractor and builder in Lighthouse Point, and another member of the JBS.

It was at this time also that John Stormer, of Florissant, Missouri, came out with a paperback book called "None Dare Call it Treason" (NDCIT), a highly successful book that was sweeping the conservative movement and enthusiastically embraced by the members of the JBS. From the very beginning of the Goldwater campaign, Austin Davis and I took it upon ourselves to order this book in case lots, first a few hundred at a time, and then supply them to the Goldwater H.Q. Soon sales were going so well we were ordering the book in quantities of several thousand and still we could not keep up with the demand. The book was selling at 75 cents retail, and we were paying 40 cents wholesale, with the profits going to the Goldwater headquarters and to the campaign. Soon my two-car garage became the main distribution center for NDCIT for not only Pompano Beach, but for Ft. Lauderdale, Miami and Boynton Beach as well. We also handled volume sales of "A Texan Looks at Lyndon" and a few other fast moving books during the campaign.

Sometime during the summer of 1964, June Abbott, of the Ft. Lauderdale JBS, along with a few others, arranged to have John Stormer come down to Miami to give a speech to the faithful. The event was more than successful. More than 4000 came to hear him speak in a large auditorium in downtown Miami. Since I had been one of Stormer's most active salesmen, I managed to approach him after the speech and he was most happy to recognize me as one of his most ardent promoters in the country. I asked him what kind of a deal we could strike if we ordered 50,000 of his books in one shipment. He considered the proposition for a while, then said he would ship them out at cost, at 15 cents per book. I said, great, give me about a week and I will see if I can t raise the funds and have them shipped to my garage. I soon raised $10,000 from about a dozen individuals in South Florida, including my own contribution, guaranteeing them all they would either get their money back in full, or they could take the difference in books at 15 cents each. Soon the shipment was on its way, and I had to move both cars out of my two-car garage. We not only moved all 50,000 books, but ordered additional quantities as well, selling approximately 80,000 NDCIT during the Goldwater campaign. I even sold a lot shipment of 5000 books to Britts Department Store in the shopping center located at the corner of Federal Highway and Oakland Park Blvd. Unfortunately, soon after the delivery, Hurricane Cleo came along and crashed in the roof of the store and most of those books became water logged and unsellable.

As soon as the Goldwater campaign was over and Goldwater lost miserably, the sales of the book stopped almost immediately, and we had a problem of getting rid of the last few hundred, whereas before we were moving thousands. However, John and I became well acquainted before he returned to Missouri. He and his wife and daughter stayed at our house, and we took them to the Calvary Baptist Church next Sunday morning, all of which came as a big surprise to Pastor Wes Auger, who was preaching profusely when we entered. After church, I introduced him to John Stormer and family, and Wes was mighty pleased that this celebrity had chosen to come to his church.

* * * * *

There is an epilogue to this story. Soon after John Stormer returned home he was suddenly bitten by the Christianity bug, and he became an ardent born-again. Some time thereafter he wrote another book, called "Death of a Nation", hoping to repeat his previous success with NDCIT. He sent me a copy of the manuscript even before the book was printed, hoping I would again enthusiastically promote the new book as I had the previous best seller. I only read part of the manuscript before I turned it away. The book was full of gloom and doom, with about every chapter ending with an apparently "new" solution Turn to Christ! Christ is the answer!

And herein we have another twist and apparent effect the JBS had on its members. Although the Birch Society openly declared that it was a non-religious society, (not unreligious) nevertheless, Its espousement of God and country, the flag and the constitution, had the overwhelming effect of turning its former non-church going members into church-goers, and I was one of those. Although my wife and I had sporadically attended the large new Presbyterian church in nearby Pompano Beach, I soon tired of the nonsense, and by 1963 I had not attended for years, having taken a dim view of the Christianity hoax. However, after joining the Birch Society, and wanting to be a good "patriot", somehow sometime in 1964 I was lured back into attending Pastor Wes Auger's little Calvary Baptist Church, located just north of Sample Road and west of Federal Highway, in Pompano Beach. Wes, who wanted to build up his small congregation, had the Birch members in mind as his potential, and was preaching the God and country hard line. Soon Austin Davis and Jim Cochrane joined, as did a number of other Birchers. Wes Auger admitted in his sermons that he had been a near criminal in his younger years, until Christ came along and "saved" him. However, looking back on it now, I can't help but believe that he was essentially a real con man, and remained such for the rest of his life. By 1967 I had had enough of this religious garbage and never set foot in his, or any other church again. Getting back to the John Stormer episode, some twelve years later, in 1976, while I was busily engaged in promoting and expanding the Creativity movement, out of the blue I received a letter from John, eulogizing the virtues of Christianity and imploring me to join with him in being saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. He apparently was now heading up some Christian church in Missouri and he had thought of my need to be saved. I sent him a copy of Nature's Eternal Religion and sent him a sincere letter suggesting that he get his thinking straightened out. Receiving no response, I sent him a second letter about three months later. Copies of both letters are recorded on pages 22 and 40 respectively of The Klassen Letters, Vol. Two.

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Soon after the Goldwater debacle, I had James Kilpatrick as featured speaker for the January 1965, meeting of Fact Finder's Forum. As I mentioned earlier, James Kilpatrick was recognized as a leading "conservative". He had a syndicated political column in several newspapers, and was himself the editor of the Manchester, New Hampshire Union Leader. He was also a strong supporter of Barry Goldwater. Whereas I, too, had strongly supported Goldwater during the campaign, by the time of the November election in 1964 I was thoroughly disenchanted with Goldwater. It seemed to me that not only had Goldwater done everything wrong, but I began to suspect that he had done so deliberately in order to lose the election and thereby discredit and undermine the conservative movement. In other words, I came to the conclusion that he had allowed himself to be used as a stalking horse for the opposition and that he was a phony. Today I still think so. In fact, more strongly than ever, that although he is only a half Jew, nevertheless, underneath his phony conservative veneer, his true loyalty lies with the Jewish cause. It did then and it does now. Be that as it may, when I had conversation with James Kilpatrick at the dinner table before his scheduled speech, I asked him a leading question that was uppermost in my mind: Why did Goldwater sell us out? Kilpatrick flew into a rage, and we almost had an imbroglio before I amiably introduced him to our group as "one of us." However, I don't think Kilpatrick ever forgave me nor I him.

Whereas the Birch Society preached that "truth is our only weapon", the Goldwater campaign nevertheless impressed a lesson upon me, namely, if we were ever to acquire some clout in the affairs of our nation we would ourselves have to become politically active. I began preaching this line among our membership and encouraged them to run for the different political offices available in Broward County, and for the sake of unity we should concentrate on the Republican party and take control of it in this county. My wife and I ran for Republican Committeeman and woman in our district, about the lowest office available, and I went campaigning for both of us, door to door, in Lighthouse Point. We won overwhelmingly in the next election, and soon I was knee deep into politics. Other Birchers did likewise countywide, and soon we were the controlling power of the Republican Committee in Broward County. This then led to my further running for the office of Florida State Representative later, but that is another episode, and in this chapter I basically want to stick to my experiences within the Birch Society.

During the summer of 1966, while I was running for the office of State Representative from Broward County, the combined Birch Societies of South Florida staged a major event by having Robert Welch, the founder of the Birch Society, speak in the Ft. Lauderdale Armory. It was a hot South Florida summer night and the Armory was not air-conditioned. It was at this time that I first met Welch and I had the honor of giving the introductory speech to an assembly that was crowded with about 1600 people. In my speech I gave Welch a glowing eulogy, even quoting a verse as I remembered it from my eighth grade reader of the "Burial March of Dundee":

O thou lion hearted warrior
Reck not of the aftertime
When honor may be deemed dishonor
And loyalty a crime.

It seemed like it was even too much for Robert. He kept shaking his head repeatedly as I spoke. I still have my speech on a tape somewhere, not that I am proud of it. Had I known then what I know now, I would have said something altogether different.

It was also at this assembly that I met Dr. William Campbell Douglass, who wrote the pre-recorded "Let Freedom Ring" telephone messages for the Society. After my election in November of 1966, Welch called me from Boston and invited me to sit at the head table with a select group for a major bash and dinner the JBS was having in the ballroom of a major hotel in New York. In his main address Welch pointed with pride how Birch members were being elected to national and state offices. He pointed to a member who had just been elected to the office of State Senator in Alaska, and to myself to the office of State Representative in Florida, inferring that we had the country wrapped up from one end to the other.

It was at this dinner meeting that I happened to sit beside an extremely successful young man in his early thirties from California. He was by now a multi-millionaire and his name was William Penn Patrick. He had founded the cosmetics firm of Holiday Magic a few years ago that was by now expanding by leaps and bounds. He was also very active in California politics, being the head of an organization known as UROC (United Republicans of California). He told me how his secretary had been attacked late one night while working alone in his office. Her face had been severely slashed and disfigured, and her breasts also had been slashed with a razor. She was left bleeding to death when she managed just enough energy to get to the telephone to call for help. Before leaving, the attacker left the warning that the next time it would be her boss. Although Patrick did not know the identity of the attacker, he plainly got the message that it was based on politics.

The next morning after the dinner the Board of Directors of the JBS had their private monthly board meeting, which both Patrick and myself were invited to attend and speak about the political climate. This we did, and William Penn Patrick warned the group that Ronald Reagan, who was then the new governor of California, was another Eisenhower and a very dangerous man. Reagan was being groomed for the presidency of the United States, he said, and he predicted that sooner or later Ronald Reagan would be elected. We must remember he made this prediction in 1966, fourteen years before it happened. Sitting by himself off to one side of the room at a little table observing all and busily taking notes, but not participating in the meeting, was a swarthy Jew, the head of the Jewish branch of the John Birch Society. Why the Jews should have a special "branch" when no one else did was never explained to me, but we were oh, so happy that this powerful group was on "our" side! How lucky can you get?

I had some further exchange of correspondence with William Penn Patrick and he sent me a beautiful blue vinyl LP record for which he had written the script and which he narrated. The title of it was "Happiness and Success through Principle. " I still have that record today. There is a tragic footnote to this story. A few years later, while his company, Holiday Magic, was rapidly expanding even into several foreign countries, I happened to see an article in the morning paper about William Penn Patrick. It seems that during a flight in his private plane there had been a malfunction, and the plane suddenly nose dived to the ground, killing both him and his pilot. Now, in retrospect, I am sure that the Jewish Mossad sabotaged his plane, recognizing that he was a potential political power to be reckoned with and decided to have him killed, as they had threatened to do earlier. I also suspect that it was one of their assassins that attacked his secretary earlier. Soon after I was elected to the State Legislature, the Supreme Court, or the Jewish power network behind it, did not like the complexion of the new membership of both the House and the Senate and decided that Florida had to be redistricted". This also meant that there had to be a new election. Since I had shown my true political colors for the short time I had been in there, which was anti-liberal, anti-establishment, I began to draw fire from the press, and also from the political leadership. This was to be expected, but what surprised me was that when I now ran for the office of State Senator, instead of the support I had expected, I now sensed a certain hostility from some of the leading members of the Birch Society Itself. At first I couldn't believe it. Here I was, sticking my neck out, openly running as a member of the Society, giving the organization wide-spread publicity, yet the leadership was now plainly showing opposition and hostility. Again, the details of this campaign belong in another chapter. Suffice it to say that my suspicions about the JBS were aroused after this episode, but I carried on.

After my defeat for the Senatorial race in 1967, I decided to take my family on a tour of Europe, then after returning from that trip, I decided to go back into the real estate business. This I did and opened an office at 884 No. Federal Highway in Pompano Beach. Initially, I took in with me Austin Davis, with whom I had been collaborating in both my political activities and also in the JBS. We opened up a dual set of twin offices, side by side, connected by a door in the dividing wall. We formed a new corporation, known as Pines 'n Palms Ranches, Inc., for our real estate operation, and in the office next door we set up a JBS bookstore, known as American Opinion Bookstore. We were now in business in a big way, and were the main center and gathering point for the Society in the north half of Broward County.

We not only sold books and Society literature but we also held meetings and showed films. One of the most effective films the JBS had put together at this time (1967) was a 45 minutes production called "Anarchy, U.S.A." It showed how the "communists" were stirring up dissention and revolution all over the world, never, of course, mentioning that the Jews had a hand in it all. The clincher came in the end, when the film showed George Lincoln Rockwell, that terrible Nazi, leading a small parade somewhere, then, zeroing in for a close-up of his face and the corncob pipe. It concluded with the dire warning: never, never must we Birchers join in with those nasty racists, who were the real troublemakers of the world. End of lesson.

Although we were putting in more of our time and money than anyone else in the county, there was a certain hostility and jealousy from the older members of the Society, especially from the southern half, and even from some in our own area. Evidently, I was talking about "the Jewish problem" too much by now, and also about the niggers taking over. The "Jewish problem" began to weigh more and more in my mind. I began to examine my original premises more thoroughly, and again read Henry Ford's "The International Jew." I became more interested in the racial problem, and looked into The Citizens Councils organization, who were similar to the JBS, but were against niggers, mildly. Soon I formed another corporation, the Pompano Beach Citizens Councils, and we had regular meetings at the Bookstore headquarters. Among the members, I noticed, was one Jew, of whom I was immediately suspicious.

Austin and I began to lean more and more towards the racial issue, and, to check our premises we decided to visit the Citizens Councils headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. While attending a major dinner there, we kept bringing up the Jewish issue, and found out soon enough that the head honchos of the Councils, like the JBS, were not interested in discussing this issue. It took us a little while longer to discover that the Citizens Councils were a twin Jewish replica of the Birch Society, again, running interference for the Jews, but organized to neutralize those goyim that didn't like niggers. On the way back from Montgomery, I called up Dr. William C. Douglass, he of the "Let Freedom Ring" fame, and made an appointment to discuss with him the Jewish issue. This we did for three hours at a real fancy restaurant in Sarasota, Florida, one he had selected. We debated the issue until the restaurant owner suggested they were ready to close. Throughout the debate the doctor kept defending and alibying for the Jews, although hard put in doing so. That ostensibly was the end of our friendship, and I have never seen the doctor again. One of his acquaintances sometime later informed me that Douglass was himself half Jew. My last contact with him was when, after breaking with the Birch Society, I wrote him a long letter, the contents of which can be found on page 18 of THE KLASSEN LETTERS, Vol. 1.

The final realization for me, I believe, had already come when I attended the John Birch Society God and Country Rally in Boston during the July Fourth weekend of 1969. When I saw the musical band that Welch had selected to entertain us consisted solely of niggers in baggy, bright colored pants, it turned my stomach. It was at this time it began to dawn on me that the Birch Society was a phony set-up, but the full extent of it had not yet sunk in. It was also at this meeting that I met another Californian (not William Penn Patrick) who was very agitated about their governor, Ronald Reagan, and again warned that Reagan was another Eisenhower, a wolf in sheep's clothing. I argued more and more about the racial issue, and about the Jewish issue. These issues became more and more paramount in my mind, as they also did with Austin Davis.

Meanwhile, in August and September of 1969 Austin and I were still preoccupied with the Citizen's Councils and also the American Independent Party, although our faith in either was fading rapidly. On August 29 Austin and I flew into Montgomery, Alabama to attend a two-day convention at their newly built headquarters to try to find out once and for all where the CCA stood. (Both these stories about the CCA and the AIP are related in more detail in Milestone 46.)

Suffice it to say that when I returned from Colorado in the latter part of September, Austin and I sat down at a table in our bookstore to make a long, agonizing re-appraisal of our situation, especially the integrity of the John Birch Society. We had some major decisions to make as to what and whom we had been supporting.

A week or two later, we called Jim Cochrane, one of the major JBS chapter leaders in Pompano to a conference in the bookstore and confronted him with the Jewish issue. He started sweating profusely, and his only defense was "All the Jews?" meaning that even if it was a Jewish conspiracy we should not condemn every Jew as being part of that conspiracy, just individual by individual, regardless of their race or religion. I said to Jim: Why the double standard? When the "allies" manipulated by the Jews in the mass horror of fire-bombing Dresden to death, killing some 350,000 Germans in two days, they did not selectively spare the women, the children, the little babies or the refugees from the east that were fleeing the communist killers. So why are you all blubber and why are you so goddamn protective of the Jews? That was the last time I ever saw Jim Cochrane.

A few days later we called in Claude Boring, the JBS Coordinator for South Florida, whom we had known for years. We sat him down at the same table in the bookstore and put the same question to him. He, too, sweated profusely and kept chain-smoking one cigarette after another. He came through more frankly than had Jim Cochrane. "Listen," he said, "We all know it's the Jews. Welch knows it's the Jews and so does just about every member of the Birch Society. If we went against the Jews we would be labeled anti-Semitic and that would be the end of the Society." Really? What about your credo that "the truth is our only weapon?" You are sure as hell not telling the whole truth when you totally ignore and fall to expose the most important and powerful enemy in the whole conspiracy, now are you? He could not come up with any logical answer, and Austin and I could come to only one conclusion that made any sense: namely the Birch Society was running interference for the Jews, all the while pointing the finger at the communists, while the Birch Society itself was a part of the Jewish conspiracy.

I did the honorable thing and did what I had to do. On November 5, 1969, I wrote Robert Welch a long and accusative letter, letting him know what he undoubtedly already knew, namely that the John Birch Society was a hoax and a fraud, set up by the Jews themselves in an attempt to protect their sinister conspiracy from becoming common knowledge. Furthermore, I was resigning, and demanded a refund of my one thousand dollar lifetime membership contribution I had so trustingly given them two years earlier. The full text of my letter can be read on page 16 of THE KLASSEN LETTERS, Vol. 1. Welch wrote me a pious, but hypocritical 2 page letter, to the tune of, Ben, what in heaven's name has happened to you? But the treacherous scoundrel refused to make a refund for his treachery. What evidently had happened to me is that was confronted with reality and began to see the whole picture.

So ended my involvement with the deceitful John Birch Society. It was a major turning point in my life.

Against the Evil Tide - 39

Milestone Thirty-Eight: Trip to California and Parts West
Summer of 1965

We had left California in 1958 and I had only been back there briefly to conclude some business affairs for my Canolectric company in 1959, as I related in a previous chapter. Now, in 1965, the whole family decided we should take a trip out West and see a lot of the good old U.S.A., and especially Henrie and Kim wanted to spend some time with Henrie's mother, who, of course, was also Kim's grandmother. Mrs. Eleanor McWilliams was now 80 years old, and retired from teaching school. She was living alone in her comfortable house at 458 Mannel Ave., in the small town of Shatter, located about 15 miles northwest of Bakersfield, California.

We had acquired a lovable boxer female about a year earlier from one of our neighbors, the Mayes, three doors down the street. You could almost say that Kim abducted the dog and lured it away from them by sheer love and affection. Anyway, Kim and Tammy took to each other with so much mutual fervor that the dog spent practically all of its time in our yard and at our house. Finally, the Mayes boys, who owned the dog, decided they might as well transfer ownership of the dog over to Kim. Which is what they did, including all of Tammy's prestigious pedigree papers.

So early one morning in July we took off, with Kim and Tammy in the back seat of our four door Chevrolet Impala. Our first destination was St. Augustine, Florida, where we stayed overnight. After a good dinner we went to see the perpetually running historical performance of "The Cross and the Sword." It was staged outdoors in a major setting and replays the early Spanish history of Florida, of the Conquistadors and the priests who built the Missions and tried to convert the heathen Indians. It was heavily weighted in propaganda against the White Man and in favor of the Indians, but nevertheless, an impressive production. We left very early the next morning, since we had made New Orleans our target destination for the day. Considering that in 1965 there were still no interstate freeways to help speed us on our route, we had a long day ahead of us. But we made it to New Orleans and had dinner at the Court of the Three Sisters, and an excellent dinner it was.

We had a bit of a problem with Tammy. According to the New Orleans city ordinances at the time, a motel could not allow dogs in its rooms. Since it was a hot summer night, it was difficult to leave her in the car all night, even with the windows partially down. So about midnight Kim sneaked Tammy into the room anyway, and then early next morning put her back in the car.

In the morning we all went to Brennan's Restaurant, another famous New Orleans eatery, and had "Breakfast at Brennan's." There was a movie by that name made earlier. Our next important destination was San Antonio, Texas. We wanted to see the historical Alamo, about which we had heard so much. When we got there it was hot, real hot, as Tammy found out, as she gingerly tiptoed over the hot pavement around the grounds.

A subsequent night we stayed at a motel in Ft. Stockton, Texas. I happen to remember this stop because of a beautiful painting of some running horses. The painting was hanging over the fireplace in the lobby. Henrie was sorely tempted to buy the painting at the time, but she decided not to. She has been sorry she didn't ever since. We drove on westward to see the Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, staying in a motel in Whites City. It was the first time any of us had seen the Caverns, and we were highly impressed by their immensity and their beauty. Their cool temperatures inside were a welcome contrast from the heat outside.

While at the motel Kim happened to run downhill on a gravelly road and fell, severely cutting one knee in the gravel. We bandaged it up as best we could and went on to Santa Fe the next day. There we went to a doctor and had the cuts examined, cleaned, and freshly bandaged. From there we pressed onward to the Grand Canyon. When we arrived there in the middle of the afternoon we had difficulty finding a place to stay. Finally we were able to rent a cabin, but when we were ready to move in, we discovered to our dismay that a skunk had been there before us, if not in the cabin itself, at least underneath of it. After much further search, we finally found a fairly decent room for the night, minus any scent of skunk.

We stayed at the Canyon a few days, exploring the outlying attractions and walking partway down the South Rim trails into the Canyon Itself.

After watching some of the Indian dances and other attractions, we left, backtracking eastward along the South Rim and crossing the canyon and the Colorado River at Marble Canyon. Traveling through the Kalbab Forest we saw some of the unique squirrels for which the forest is famous. From there on we headed for Las Vegas. In Vegas we arranged to see some of the nightclub shows and one that stands out particularly was called "The Spirit of America." It was good clean family type of entertainment, a great show with plenty of song and dance and an amplitude of flag waving. Being very much caught up in the Birch Society at the time, it greatly appealed to all of us.

We arrived in Shatter, California, a few days later. Shatter is a farming town located in the southern end of the fertile San Joaquin Valley, about fifteen miles north and west of Bakersfield. At the time it had a population of about three thousand, which has now increased to about seven thousand, largely due to the Mexican and Chicano influx. The farming area around it is highly productive, growing mostly cotton, potatoes, alfalfa and grapes. Several of the farmers are millionaires, which includes a few Mennonites.

When we arrived, one of the first events was to be invited to a barbecue dinner with the Wiedmann family. Mert and Pat Wiedmann own the Stringham Drugstore, started by Pat's father, Mr. Stringham. It was at the time the main drugstore in Shatter. The Wiedmanns are one of the wealthier and leading citizens of the town. They had an illustrious family of four children, three girls and one boy, all of which now, 25 years later, are either in medicine or the drugstore business in other towns in California. Mrs. McWilliams, who for several years taught school in Shatter, was the teacher of some of the Wiedmann children at one time or another. In the summer of 1963 their daughter Janet, who is about Kim's age, had come to visit and stayed with us in Lighthouse Point for a week.

During our stay in Shatter, about 130 miles to the south, the Birch Society was having a dinner and speakers in a motel in Norwalk, a suburb of Los Angeles. Being a good Bircher, I drove down to attend. Now Norwalk is south and east of the then nigger enclave called Watts. Twenty-five years ago the area was not laced with freeways as it is today and in driving through the area it was necessary to utilize main streets and boulevards to traverse the megalopolis. It just so happened that the day after the night I drove through Watts on my way back to Shatter, all hell broke loose in Watts. It was one of the earlier niggertown riots of burning, looting and mayhem during the so-called "civil rights" era, a phenomenon that was to occur again and again in many parts of the nation during the sixties and seventies and beyond. Had I driven through that black Jungle one night later I would undoubtedly have been caught up in the crossfire of these rampaging jungle bunnies.

In 1965, the Los Angeles Music Center had just newly opened. Henrie and I called in for reservations and were fortunate enough to obtain tickets. Although I don't remember much about the program, except that the music was beautiful, I do remember the impressiveness of the building itself, the three huge crystal chandeliers in the foyer and the lavishness of the furnishings.

By the middle of August Henrie and Tammy and I drove back across the country. Kim stayed on in Shatter and went on a boat trip with the Wiedmann family. It seems that at that time each summer the Wiedmanns and a group of their friends would take a cruise out of Seattle on a flotilla of small boats. Anyway, in 1965 they joined a group of about five boats and cruised up Puget Sound to some destination in Canada and back, the trip lasting about a week. It was an interesting adventure for Kim.

Meanwhile, on our drive back to Florida, we did not make as many stops as we had on the way out. We did stop in New Orleans for a few days to take a better look at the city. We stayed at a motel on Bourbon Street and ate at some of the famous restaurants. I remember picking up a large poster of Adolf Hitler at some hockshop on Bourbon Street. The poster only cost $2.00. I still have it, and it was recently utilized as a copy for an oil painting, done by Ron McVan.

Since New Orleans had this prohibition about allowing dogs in motels, we had put Tammy in a kennel. After being cooped up for three days, she was very antsy and eager to run. When we picked her up I put her in the back seat of the car, as usual. Shortly thereafter, while stopping at a filling station to get gas, I made the mistake of leaving my front window down. Tammy jumped over the front seat, out the window, and took off like a streak of lightning, darting off across a busy six-lane boulevard and just ran, ran, ran. Cars were honking and screeching and we thought surely she would be killed. Henrie almost had a heart attack. Miraculously, after she had her workout, she dashed across that same busy boulevard and got back into the car, much to our relief.

We returned safely to Lighthouse Point. A week or so later we picked up Kim at the airport on her return. Soon thereafter she enrolled in her first year at Pine Crest, a private school in Pompano Beach.

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Milestone Thirty-Eight: Trip to California and Parts West
Summer of 1965

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Against the Evil Tide - 40

Milestone Thirty-Nine: Speaking of the Toastmasters Clubs
1964-1969

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In the chapter on the John Birch Society I have already alluded to the conclusion that if we were ever to exercise any clout in the control of our affairs it was necessary that we ourselves would have to become significantly involved in politics. The secondary conclusion that accrued from the political involvement was that in order to be successful in politics it was necessary to become a capable and convincing public speaker. The next question was how do you become a good public speaker?

The answer to that question was - Toastmasters. The Toastmasters International, whose world headquarters were in Santa Ana, California, offered an excellent opportunity to become a good public speaker. Shortly after I had decided that political action was the answer to our problems, I inquired into the matter and in the spring of 1964 I became a member of the Pompano Beach Toastmasters Club 3003. It was relatively easy to join, and not very expensive. Not only did it provide a continuing opportunity to improve one's speaking abilities but it was also a congenial social club.

We met at a local restaurant in Lighthouse Point on a weekly basis. The meetings were scheduled for the evenings and included dinner. The members were scheduled two or three months in advance as to what their duties would be at each meeting, whether they were to be speakers, or timekeepers, or parliamentarians, or evaluators, or one of about a dozen other duties. Usually three or four members would speak on an evening, and the speeches were programmed for five to seven minutes, with a maximum of 15 minutes. One of the fellows would control the "Ah Box", and bang a bell every time a speaker would pause and inject an "Ah", a no-no that the club tried to expunge and a good speaker was taught to avoid. Every "Ah" was counted and the offending speaker had to ante a nickel into the "Ah Box" for each offense at the end of the evening. Usually there were also two or more evaluators who would criticize each speech and offer suggestions for improvements. This was done after all the speakers had finished. Then there would be a vote by the total membership and a Best Speaker Award was presented at the end of the evening.

There was plenty of competition and rivalry, but by and large it was a friendly type of competition, and quite constructive. I found that it did a lot for me and was a big help in the political arena. There was a Basic Training Manual and also a number of other official books and manuals the club offered. By October the 6th, 1967 I had completed the series of speech assignments proscribed in the Basic Training Manual and was awarded the Certificate of Merit from the general manager of Toastmasters International.

* * * * *

During my five-year tenure with Toastmasters, I probably got to meet more than a hundred individual members in our own club, and in neighboring clubs. One common characteristic about most of them was that they were interesting people. By and large they were intelligent individualists, more competent than the average, and also more ambitious and articulate. A few of those in our own P. B. Club #3003 that were regulars and stand out in my mind after more than 20 years are the following:

Arthur D. Donnelly, an urbane retired gentleman with a furry voice and a benign smile, reminiscent of our ex-president Ronald Reagan (no offense, Arthur.) Jack Flaherty, a robust Irishman, who was a major executive of a Ft. Lauderdale construction company, and was capable of expressing himself forthrightly without quibbling.

Vincent Ring, an accountant and a capable speaker, Ray Maurer, an account executive with the Kidder Peabody brokerage firm.

John Shanahan, another good Irishman and a long time member. He was a partner in an insurance firm. Arthur Burton, who acted and looked like a Jew and repeatedly bragged about all the corporations of which he was president. Actually, his racket was to dig up old defunct land corporations, reactivate them, then use them to blackmail title companies to pay him a few hundred dollars to quiet title in order to erase some cloud the old corporation might threaten to the title of what was now very valuable real estate. Usually it worked, with the title companies rationalizing that it was cheaper to pay him off than argue in court.

Then, last but not least, there was my long-time sidekick, Austin Davis, who shared many of my political endeavors.

* * * * *

In the meantime, as individuals we could also participate in other clubs on invitation, which I did quite often.

I participated in several Toastmasters clubs to the south. One was the Sunrise Toastmasters Club #2508 in Ft. Lauderdale. The Sunrise Club held their meetings in the morning for early breakfast sessions. I recall attending probably half a dozen of their meetings, being a speaker on each occasion. I remember representing our Club #3003 in a debate with the Ft. Lauderdale club about the Vietnam War. My partner and I took the position that we should be in that war and that we should win it as quickly as possible. The other side took the position that we should get out of it as soon as possible. Today, in hindsight, I regard both of those positions as stupid. We should never have sent our boys out there to be killed for nothing in the first place. Further to the South, I also participated in the Hallandale "Early Bird" Club meetings and in the Hollywood Toastmasters Club #3770 a few times.

Usually I would write and type my anticipated speech, rehearse it and time it. Whereas we might use a few notes while speaking we would never read our speeches. I still have several typed copies of my speeches in my old files.

Soon I was giving any number of outside speeches to various clubs, fraternities and organizations other than Toastmasters. After I became involved in the political campaign of 1966 the number of invitations increased. I spoke before the Kiwanis, the Rotary Club, any number of political groups, especially the Republican clubs, to the League of Women Voters, to P.T.A. groups, to Veteran's groups, to a few Ft.

Lauderdale Klan gatherings and picnics, and even to the Gold Coast Chapter of Parents without Partners. I remember the latter because I still have their flyer which says I spoke to them on January 17th, 1969 on crime prevention and safeguarding your home. Being in the "Borscht" speaking circuit also got me involved in a few radio and television talk shows. I participated in several "Dick Vance" radio programs in Ft. Lauderdale, sometimes solo with Dick, and one time in partnership with Jim Coryell. Both of these fellows professed to be dyed-in-the-wool "Conservatives", but in retrospect I strongly suspect both of them were agents of the establishment. Jim Coryell, when I had a private lunch with him at one time, confessed he had been an F.B.I, agent (he probably still was). He put out a periodical smear tabloid in which he would do a hatchet job on some politician at a critical time before the election. Dick Vance had a radio talk show that seemed to support the Birch group and the "conservative" viewpoint, but really lacked in substance. I also recall being invited to a talk show in Miami Beach sometime in 1968. In this I was promoting George Wallace, while the host, who claimed he once lived in Alabama under the Wallace governorship, was roundly denouncing George Wallace.

In my Toastmasters' file I have a letter dated January 3, 1969, from the Community Television Foundation of South Florida, Inc., WTHS-TV, inviting me to discuss the Liberty Amendment on "The Bill Smith Show" at 9:30 PM, Monday, January 13, 1969, at their Miami studio. This I did, and I recall the event quite clearly. Bill Smith, probably not his real name, was a smooth talking, nice looking young Jewish talk show host. I was for the Liberty Amendment and he was against it. The Liberty Amendment was sponsored by Willis Stone and was part of the Birch agenda. It proposed to repeal the Sixteenth Amendment and do away with the Income tax.

I also appeared on a TV show in Ft. Lauderdale in partnership with Pastor Wes Auger, whose Calvary Baptist Church I had started to attend. The subject of our appearance, however, escapes me.

Sometime in early 1967, while I was in the Florida Legislature, I was the subject of an editorial attack by a TV commentator in Orlando, Florida. The station had the decency of sending me a transcript of the commentary, which criticized my membership in the Birch Society and my "extremist" conservative leanings. They invited me to make a rebuttal on the same time slot and have the whole five minutes the commentator had used to answer him with my own prepared speech. I took up the challenge, drove all the way to Orlando to give them my "what fer" in my five minute spiel.

I don't recall exactly when I stopped participating in Toastmasters, but it must have been towards the end of 1969, when my philosophical focus took a new turn, away from the "conservative" viewpoint and towards that espoused in Nature's Eternal Religion. The last piece I have in my Toastmasters file is a "Certificate of Appreciation" for an address to the Deer-field Beach Kiwanis. It is dated August 2. 1969.

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Milestone Thirty-Nine: Speaking of the Toastmasters Clubs
1964-1969

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Milestone Forty: Trip to Canada and Points North

Summer of 1966

By 1966 I was thoroughly enmeshed in the activities of the Birch Society and thinking about running for political office in order to be more effective. The Society was holding their annual "God and Country" rally in Boston over the coming Fourth of July celebration and I thought it would be educational and constructive to have the whole family attend and get to know better the Society's roster of speakers and their top echelon. The JBS was headquartered in Belmont, Massachusetts, and a suburb of Boston.

While that far north, I thought, we might as well meander over the border into Canada and visit my sister Katie and her family, who lived in Niagara Falls, Ontario. So again we packed Kim and Tammy into the back seat of the Impala and away we went.

Arriving in Boston, we stayed in a downtown hotel nearby to the hotel where the rally was being held. The weather in Boston that weekend was hot, somewhere around 93 degrees, as I recall. The rally lasted three days over the weekend and I listened to an endless array of speakers give their particular spiel. I managed to arrange a meeting with Tom Anderson and Dan Smoot and tried to drum up some kind of a political action program with the leaders in the top echelon, similar to what I was promoting in Broward County.

I had read many of Dan Smoot's reports on the first page of which his picture always appeared. He had been a former FBI agent and I had always imagined him to be a husky, two-fisted fighter, ready to do battle with anybody. When I met him in the flesh, I was disappointed. He was short, small and timid, I thought. Tom Anderson did a lot of talking and Dan Smoot did a lot of waffling, but mostly it ended up with alibis as to why we would be better off just doing our thing disseminating "the truth" and let someone else do the politicking.

There were any number of seminars, booths and bookstalls at the rally, much like a regular convention. One of the booths that attracted our attention, or at least Kim's attention, was a certain one from Vermont, called "The Green Mountain Boys." It was being manned by Vaughn Griffin, Jr., and his father. Kim was 15 at this time, and looked like a grown-up young lady several years older. Vaughn was a strapping young man of 21, six foot three, and very personable. Soon Kim volunteered to help man the booth, distribute literature and promote the "Green Mountain Boys." Soon, also, Kim and Vaughn were hitting it off nicely. Next, Henrie and I were meeting Mr. & Mrs.Vaughn Griffin and they were inviting us to come and visit them after the Rally at their summer home on the shores of Lake Champlain. With Kim's urging we accepted. Vaughn Griffin, Sr. was an attorney in Rutland, Vermont, where the family lived most of the year. He was very active in the Birch Society and the Green Mountain Boys was his own special organization to promote the cause. Their summer home on the shores of Lake Champlain was located near Shoreham. The home itself had quite a history that went back more than a hundred and fifty years. It used to be a travelers' inn and also a stagecoach stop in the early part of the nineteenth century.

We stayed with the Griffins for two days. Kim and Vaughn Jr. spent quite a bit of time canoeing and swimming in the lake. Tammy took part in the water activities and joined in the fun. The two big German Shepherds that the Griffins had were somewhat of a puzzle and a worry for Tammy. She never was quite sure whether they were friendly or a threat to her safety.

From Shoreham we drove north and east to the rocky coast of Maine. Here we visited Acadia National Park, and saw the stately old mansions of the old time millionaires at Bar Harbor. All of the scenery here was very rocky and very picturesque. From there, by extremely circuitous routes, we found our way to the little fishing town of Stonington, located at the very tip of a series of rocky Islands. Here we visited Wilma and Chad Knowiton, friends we had known in Pompano Beach. Chad's father was a lobsterman, going out daily in his typical old New England lobster boat and tending to his traps. While there Chad invited us to go on a round with his dad on his boat, which we did. I found it very interesting, but considered it a hard way to make a living.

While in Maine we indulged in much native seafood for which Maine is famous. I remember especially a whole pot of steamed clams being set before us on the table at one session, and us stuffing ourselves silly.

From Maine we backtracked west to Niagara Falls, where we crossed the border into Canada. When the Canadian Customs and Immigration officer saw Tammy in the back seat, he took a sharp look and reminded us we had to have some kind of medical certificate for the dog before we could take her across the border into Canada. Of course, we didn't have any, but after another look and second thoughts, he concluded, what the hell, she's all right, and let us cross.

My sister Katie and her husband Herbert (Snider) had met in 1945 in Colombia, South America, where both were missionaries. Soon they married and soon they started raising a large family. They left Colombia in 1961 and stayed at our house in Lighthouse Point for a week, deciding what they should do next. Another missionary had left a car, or more of a jalopy, in our driveway, a month or two before, much to our highbrow neighbors' consternation. Some began asking us if we were starting a used car business or a junk shop. Anyway, Katie and Herbert arrived at the Miami airport with their brood of eight and after staying with us for a week decided to go back to Niagara Falls from which mission center Katie had departed some 16 years earlier. They packed all their sparse belongings and eight kids into their gratis jalopy and off they went. We bade them a fond farewell. That was in the summer of 1961.

Now in 1965 they had availed themselves of a 20-acre fruit orchard with a house, and while not getting rich, they were doing quite well. Their eight children now came into good use in tending the garden (they also raised vegetables and grapes) and in picking cherries and apples. We had a very lovely time visiting with them, while they showed us many of the sights for which Niagara Falls is famous. We went down the elevator shafts to view the massive falls from the backside. We went on one of the sightseeing boats below the falls, the same "Maid of the Mist" that Katie and I had toured back in the summer of 1942 when I worked at the nickel mines in Sudbury, Ontario, and had come to visit her in Toronto and Niagara Falls.

We also took a side trip to visit my cousin Helen (nee Klassen) who lived with her husband Waldemar Schroeder and her seven-year-old daughter Margaret in Kitchener, Ontario. While there we also visited a distant Mennonite uncle, Henry Epp, and his gracious wife, who had a lovely home in Kitchener. They were so hospitable and indulged us in the old Mennonite custom of serving us "fesper", a mid-afternoon luncheon of tea or coffee, and cakes and cookies. From there we began our trip back to Florida again, where I soon resumed into my political campaign in running for the office of Republican State Legislator.

There is a tragic epilogue to our visit to see Katie and her family. A month or two after we returned we received the news that their oldest son, Paul, who was 19, had drowned in the whirlpool rapids below the falls while on a picnic with friends one Sunday afternoon. It seems that they were having their picnic lunch on a rocky promontory at the waters edge, and in an instant of careless movement the turbulent waters caught him off balance and swept him down the whirlpool to his death. His body was found floating in Lake Ontario three days later. We were all shocked and Katie never did fully recover from that tragedy.

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Milestone Forty: Trip to Canada and Points North

Summer of 1966

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Milestone Forty-One: A Brief Venture into the Political Arena
Running as a Conservative Republican for the Florida House
1966

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As in most of the southern states, the Democratic Party had been holding sway in Florida ever since the Reconstruction days, and usually it was only a matter of who won in the primaries of the Democratic Party as to who was the next elected official. By 1966, however, the political climate in Florida was changing, especially in Broward County, which had a large number of new residents who were transplants from the north. But the biggest factors were President Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War. Everybody was sick of the no-win war, and for good reasons, and just about everybody hated Lyndon Johnson, also for good reasons. Added to this was the fear and apprehension generated by the ongoing "Civil Rights" movement, with the niggers burning down whole sections of cities like Detroit, Washington, Watts and dozens of others. Public sentiment nationwide was turning against the Johnson administration (1963-1968). Even in the "solid" South, and especially in Florida, voters were turning away from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party in 1966. However, few people realized this while it was happening, and least of all the candidates in Broward County who lined up to run as Republicans. But not all the counties in Florida were turning to the Republican Party by any means, and the majority of the House and Senate at Tallahassee remained in Democratic hands even after the 1966 November elections.

For the last two years I had been advocating to our Birch members that they get into politics and get elected, that we take control of the Broward Republican Committee, and it had paid off. To put my money where my mouth was, I had registered as a Republican, was a committeeman from my district, and Henrie was a committeewoman from the same district. I now decided to run for the office of State Legislator District 1. (Broward County had eight districts, although the election of each was at large, and countywide.) In recalling the campaign of 1966 and again the campaign for Senator in 1967 I am fortunate in not having to rely solely on memory. Although incomplete, I have a file of a number of newspaper clippings of that era to which I can refer. On February 17, 1966 a headline on the front page of the "B" section of the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel it stated: "GOP Endorses 5; Bircher Included." The letters in the double headline were large, almost 3/4 of an inch high. This was undoubtedly the opening gun of the GOP campaign. Five of us had filled out the screening committee's questionnaire, three candidates for the Legislature, two for the Senate. Although five of us applied and were approved, more than half of the article was devoted to me, apparently because a "Bircher" had the nerve to try to run for office. Here are two paragraphs from the article:

'Questioned as to whether his Birch membership would be a benefit or a hindrance to his candidacy, Klassen replied "It is a good, patriotic organization dedicated to the principles of freedom, the Constitution, free enterprise and all the things a good American should go along with."

Another paragraph stated: Klassen listed no definite issues for his legislative race, but said as a legislator he would fight "bigger and bigger government," socialism, and try to aid in recovering for the state some of the powers given to the states in the Constitution, and keep some money in the state instead of sending it to Washington and seeing it come back under certain conditions.

That same day the Miami Herald ran an article on the same subject, namely that five GOP candidates for the Florida legislature from Broward had been endorsed. But the headline focused on Ben Klassen: "Birchite Hopeful Asks GOP Support."

A few days later the rest of the GOP slate filed and was completed. Here is how the line up stood.

Group 1 Bernard Klassen
Group 2 Richard A. Bird
Group 3 John W. Bell
Group 4 Henry J. Prominski
Group 5 Arthur Rude
Group 6 James D. Mackey
Group 8 James R. Eddy

No Republican filed for District 7, and it was left unopposed to the Democrats. Two Republicans filed for State Senator in two different districts, namely Chester Stolzenberg and James Gregory, in Districts 39 and 48 respectively. District 30 was left unopposed to incumbent Democratic Senator A. J. Ryan.

That completed Broward County's Republican slate for the House and the Senate. There was no primary opposition for any of the seats. Republicans were too scared at this point to run against each other. We were now off and running for the finals in the November election and did not have to worry about Republican primaries. My Democratic opposite in Group 1 was to be Richard Brown, an incumbent.

We were a jolly crew. Since there were no rivalries nor the primary election, there was a spirit of good teamwork and no infighting as such. Most of us were first time novices and relished our newly won opportunity to appear in the spotlight and enter into the political arena. There were a number of expenses. I had probably a few dozen 4'x6' billboards with my picture made up. My aide-de-camp Austin Davis and I nailed them up on 2x4 posts all over the county. I had hundreds of fluorescent bumper stickers made up, and probably a hundred smaller posters to nail up on telephone poles. I set up two telephone lines for people to call in on a recorded message, said message changing weekly. I had a number of campaign fliers printed up.

Once in the race, it seemed we raced around and had a meeting almost every other day at which we assembled and spoke before some group. The groups we appeared before seemed endless. They were in the categories of some civic or political group - the Republican Committee at the Courthouse, the League of Women Voters, teachers groups, school groups, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc., etc. On such occasions we would each take our turn and give a short speech about ourselves and what we stood for. There were also a number of occasions when we spoke solely as individuals and had the podium to ourselves. After I had all my political paraphernalia printed and put together, I held my opening rally in some school auditorium in Pompano Beach at which I assembled all the Birch faithful and what members of the Fact Finders Forum I could gather. (I was still head of Fact Finders Forum.) It turned out to be a very enthusiastic meeting. I had boxes full of my political flyers, bumper stickers and other pieces for distribution. All seemed a bed of roses. Another occasion in which I was the main event and gave a major political speech was at the Silver Thatch Inn on September 6, 1966, before the Pompano Beach Republican Club. The Silver Thatch was located on the beach and owned by Ed Stack, who was later to go into the political arena in a big way and a few years later finally ousted Herbert Burke for the seat in the House of Representatives in Washington. My speech was given considerable prominence in the Pompano Beach "Sun Sentinel" the next day in an article that included my picture. It was written by Sylvia Martin, one of the few reporters who seemed friendly to my political views. Some of the quotes in the article are worth repeating, and we must remember that at this time I was up to my eyebrows in the Birch Society and promoting their views. The headline of the article was "State Committee to Probe U.N. asked by GOP Office Seeker". I quote more copiously from this article because it sums up my political position more comprehensively than any other material I still have of that era. Here are some of the leading paragraphs:

Klassen, who is opposing incumbent Democrat Richard Brown for the Group One representative's seat, told members of the Pompano Beach Republican Club that Communists have found their way into high places in the federal government and that they are "trying to railroad us under an atheistic, Communist U.N." "Things in the U.S. Congress would not be the way they are," Klassen, a member of the John Birch Society, said, "if state legislatures had defended states rights and not accepted federal handouts."

At the state level, Klassen said, he would promote the "Liberty Amendment" and a committee to investigate the U.N. in an effort "to right things in the federal government. "

If all states would adopt the "Liberty Amendment", Klassen said, "It would end the personal income tax, thus depriving the federal government of a large part of its power. The personal income tax," he said, "is only half of the federal government's income, and that's more than it needs to carry on its constitutional business." Klassen charged that the federal government is illegally appropriating money for "give-away programs" that are not authorized by the Constitution.

Maintaining that he is a "middle-of-the-roader" about the type of government he supports, Klassen said he favors "limited constitutional government as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights - the greatest freedom documents ever created in 6,000 years of recorded history." Klassen, who said he is not an "extreme right-winger," said he is "extremely dedicated to protecting" a constitutional form of government.

The Constitution, he said, does not give the federal government the authority "to extract money from the people to spend on foreign aid, education, welfare, anti-poverty and other projects...the free goodies. What the government is doing, he said, "is illegal, unconstitutional and thievery."

Calling the various federal projects "socialistic", Klassen said the United States is gradually being turned over to the Communists through the appointment of Communists to high government offices, the adoption of communistic practices and the turning over of the command of U.S. military forces to the U.N., which is "run by Communists."

The Florida legislature, Klassen said, should appoint a committee to investigate the U.N. If the U.N. charter is found to be illegal by the committee, the legislature should pass a bill which would denounce, "anything the U.N. does as illegal in Florida and will not be recognized."

The government, he said, is running 20,000 illegal businesses in competition with private enterprise. The "Liberty Amendment," Klassen said, would force the government to sell these businesses.

"The big issue," Klassen said, "is if the United States will become a collective dictatorship or remain a constitutional republic. At present we are being ruled by evil men who are selling us out to the Communists." Even the Miami Herald had a reporter there to take notes. A shorter article by Bill Martinez headlined "Klassen: I'm Not An Extremist," started off with "Wearing a golden Birch leaf in his label. Republican candidate for Group One State House seat, Ben Klassen Thursday night launched a strong tirade against the Federal government."

Further down in a paragraph that stood out in bold print. It said "Klassen, who admits membership in the John Birch Society...." Horrors! How brazen can you get? There were a few other occasions in which I had a whole gathering to myself, but I don't have any record of them. One meeting of which I have no notes but which I clearly recall was a head-to-head confrontation with my Democratic opponent, incumbent Richard Brown. It was before a luncheon group of about 200 in Pompano Beach, either the Kiwanis or the Rotary Club, I don't recall which. Richard Brown spoke first. In his speech he accused me of focusing on national issues, rather than the state government. In this he was absolutely correct. I was, in fact, attacking the Supreme Court, the Viet Nam war, the usurpation of power of the Federal government at the expense of the rights of the states, and especially the bungling by the Johnson administration of the Viet Nam war. Brown made it clear that he was distancing himself from the Johnson administration in Washington, that he should not by judged by what went on in Washington, and that he was running on state issues.

When my turn came, I admitted that I was pounding the left-wing policies of the Johnson administration, but all Democrats in the party were tied to it, I said, whether they liked it or not. If they didn't like it they should leave the party and become good Americans instead of one-worlder socialists. Anyway, I ended up with a resounding denunciation of the Democrats, of Lyndon Johnson and of Richard Brown, saying in effect "Let's make a clean sweep from top to bottom and throw the rascals out."

Apparently the voters of Broward County were of the same mood, as we shall see later. But before we do there is one other episode during the campaign I want to relate.

* * * * *

Richard Nixon had made a bid for the California governorship in 1962 and had been beaten, mostly because of a hostile liberal press, which never forgave him for exposing communist Alger Hiss more than a decade earlier. It was after the defeat in California that Nixon seemingly threw in the towel and said he was quitting politics. "You won't have Nixon to kick around any more." However, by 1966 his star was rising again and that of the Democrats declining. He felt that he could make a comeback and run for the presidency again. In his countrywide campaign to do so, on September 29, 1966, he staged a Republican political rally on his behalf at the Ft. Lauderdale Municipal Auditorium to a full house. I still clearly recall his staged entrance into the auditorium, all the blaring music and spotlights as he and his entourage marched down the center aisle and up to the stage to the thunderous applause of a partisan crowd. Along with the rest of the Broward Republican delegation (about a dozen) I had the "honor" of shaking his hand, sitting on the stage with him, and listening to his rousing address. He was a good speaker and roundly denounced the Johnson administration then in power.

* * * * *

But to get back to the main event - my campaign for a seat in the Florida Legislature in Tallahassee. Came the final showdown, the day of the General Election, November 8, 1966. At about seven o'clock that evening I was driving down to the Broward County Courthouse and I had the car radio on. The results were coming in rapidly and we Republicans seemed to be winning, not only in Broward County, but also statewide for the governorship. When I arrived at the large County Commission Auditorium it was already crowded with friends, supporters and reporters and there was an air of jubilation in the Republican ranks, and gloom and doom in the Democratic Party. We were winning, but big!

As the evening wore on, the final results came in. The Broward Republican delegation to the Legislature had made a clean sweep. All seven of us won. So did the two Republican candidates for the State Senate, Chet Stolzenburg and James Gregory from Senatorial Districts 39 and 48 respectively. Only Hugh B. Cramer, who was unopposed, won a Democratic House seat, and incumbent State Senator A.J. Ryan, a fine gentleman, who ran as a Democrat and was unopposed, captured a Democratic seat from Broward County in the Senate.

Republican Claude Kirk won the governorship over Robert King High, a liberal Democrat from the Miami area. J. Herbert Burke, Republican candidate for the House of Representatives (Washington) won handily over Joe Varon, the Democratic candidate.

All in all, we had won big in Broward County and had made history. This was the first time the Republican Party had won the governorship and made a significant dent in the State House and in the Senate since the Reconstruction days of a century ago. Palm Beach and Pinellas County went overwhelmingly Republican also. However, the House and the Senate still remained strongly in the hands of the Democratic majority. The new House now had 26 Republicans and 92 Democrats, and in the Senate the Democrats outnumbered the Republicans 37 to 11. Nevertheless, in Broward County our win was almost total. We had, in fact, won every seat we had contested. We were jubilant and much celebration was in order. I had won my seat in District 1 over my Democratic opponent Richard L. Brown, the incumbent, by a vote of 57,843 to 51,543. I was in!

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Milestone Forty-Two: A Stint in the Legislature

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What had originally started out as an experiment and a gamble had now turned into a reality. Suddenly I was a celebrity of sorts. In short order after being elected I received all kinds of congratulations and mail, not only from friends, but from people I had never heard of. I was now a politician and I wielded a certain amount of clout. As a result, I was sought out for making speeches, invited to lunches and given a number of perks I had not even asked for. For example, I received an embossed membership card that entitled my wife and me to attend the Pompano Beach Harness Racing Track gratis any time I wanted to, and not only that, but when I took up their offer, my wife and I were given loge seats, free steak dinners and all the bourbon, Scotch, or whatever we wanted to drink. A similar card arrived from the Hialeah Park Race Track near Miami, and from the Hollywood Dog Track. (This "perk" was no particular boon as far as I was concerned, since I had no great interest in horse tracks, or any other form of gambling, for that matter.)

Having participated in Toastmasters for the past several years, I was now invited to speak at several functions and before any number of groups, ranging from Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce to P.T.A. groups, League of Women Voters, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis and a number of others. Even my own Toastmasters group now looked at me with new respect. I utilized as many of these occasions as I could to promote my "conservative" message, being, by and large, that of the Birch Society, namely that our government and whole system was going towards socialism, big government and collaboration with the communists. Never, however, did I point out that behind communism was the manipulative hand of the Jew. At least not yet.

Shortly after the election there was a private eyeball-to-eyeball session with the newly elected governor, Claude Kirk, at his headquarters in Palm Beach. Whether he had such a session with all the Republican electees, or just a select few, I do not recall. Anyway, I was called up to have a private talk with the governor at his then headquarters in Palm Beach. What I remember of it was that Kirk admonished me that I was not to pull "any surprises", whatever that meant, probably fearing that I might introduce some radical legislation of some sort. I assured him that there were no secrets as to what I stood for, having been extremely candid during my election campaign. I made it clear, however, that I would pursue the same independent path in the legislature. Kirk, being more liberal than he had pretended during his campaign, was not too pleased, and I couldn't have cared less. Whereas Kirk made an ideal candidate, tall, handsome, charismatic and well spoken, yet his past record indicated he was all front and no substance, and as phony as a three dollar bill. My opinion of him was not very high.

Came the day we were all sworn in at the old State Capital. (A new high-rise Capital building has been constructed since then, and the Old Capital is now a museum and also serves as storage for archives.) The nine of us Republicans from Broward County, the seven Legislators and two Senators, all of whose names I have previously listed, now formed a tightly knit group. All of us were neophyte first term electees, except Senator Chet Stolzenburg, who had served a term before. We always stayed at the same motel, and usually went out to dinners together, unless such was served at some function. We were a jolly crew, drank a considerable amount of Scotch after a session and before dinner, and we got along relatively well.

I soon learned the ropes in the legislature and got to meet and know most of the 118 members in the Legislature, and a fair number of the 48 members in the Senate. The number of functions we were invited to was staggering. There were all kinds of barbecues, dinners and functions hosted by teachers' groups, educators, highway committees, police groups, bankers groups and a slew of others. All of which were interested in either (a) having more money appropriated in their direction, or (b) getting legislation favorable to them, or both. Of all the groups, the education people were undoubtedly the most aggressive and persistent.

For some reason I don't recall, I requested to be appointed to the Banking Committee, and my request was granted by Ralph D. Turlington, Speaker of the House. Although I knew next to nothing about banking, I felt that it would probably put me in touch with the affluent and influential in Broward County. (I was also on some other committees but I don't recall what they were.) I was not mistaken about being contacted by the banking people. They had their lobbyist in the Capitol, and it so happened that he offered to take me out and buy my lunch much more frequently than any other lobbyist, an offer I could not refuse. Back home in Pompano Beach I was sought out by the scion of one of the wealthiest families who owned not only much real estate in Pompano Beach, but was also chairman of a Pompano Beach Bank. He, too, took me out to lunch and discussed legislation, something he would not have dreamed of before my election.

* * * * *

Came January 3, 1967, the day for the inauguration of the governor, his cabinet, and the legislators. There were parades in Tallahassee, speeches in the House, swearing in of the various officers. We eight legislators from Broward County were sworn in as a group and I still have a photograph of that event. But the highlight of the day was the Governor's Inaugural Ball at the Tully Gymnasium at the Florida State University.

In preparation for the big event, which was formal, I bought the first and only tuxedo I have ever owned. Henrie bought a special evening gown for the occasion also. There was much ceremony, there was much music, much booze and there was dancing. Governor Kirk, who was divorced, surprised the audience by making his grand entrance with a big brassy blonde on his arm and announcing his engagement. Whether he ever married the woman, I am not aware. Rumor had it that he had picked her up in some bar in Brazil. But for that particular evening they made a handsome and impressive couple.

* * * * *

Although the official session for the Florida Legislature was regularly scheduled to last only 60 days each year and was to begin April 4 this year, nevertheless, we were repeatedly called into special session, and much pre-session legislation was dropped into the hopper and voted on. I noticed that the Miami delegation, or more properly the Dade County delegation, which consisted of 22 members (the largest in the state) was by far the most active. Every member of it was a Democrat, mostly very liberal, and at least seven of them were Jews. I especially remember that much of that legislation originated from one Kenneth M. Myers, a Jew. The sheer amount of legislation that was generated even before the official opening of the legislative session amazed me and also alarmed me.

About this particular issue, namely the deluge of legislation, I remember giving a speech to the Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce. I said that I was not interested in encumbering the people of this state with more laws than they already had, but repealing some that were already on the books, laws that we could do without. I reminded them that every law, whether old or new. Imposed one of three burdens on the people, or a combination of one or more: (a) Ii required them to do something they did not have to do before the law was passed, (b) it prevented them from doing something that they were free to do previously, and (c) it cost them more money, in one way or another, either because of enforcement, or administration, or in taxes, or in funding whatever program the new law provided for. When we added up the thousands of laws passed each year by the U.S. Congress, by the individual states, by the county in which they lived, plus the city ordinances, we were subjected to an impossible plethora of restrictions, obligations and expenses. That, I told them, was my philosophy less government, rather than more, more, more.

I was barely getting into the swim of things and hardly getting my feet wet. Nevertheless my main concern was what the heavy hand of government was doing to us stemming from the actions of our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., an issue I had repeatedly pointed to during my election campaign. One of the actions I had promised during my campaign was to have the legislature investigate the United Nations and if it could be shown that it was an alien organization detrimental to the interests of the United States, to resolve that the State of Florida would ignore and invalidate any of its edicts and impositions. During the middle of January 1967, just as I was getting ready to frame such a resolution, the Supreme Court dropped a bombshell in our lap. It declared in effect that Florida was improperly districted and did not comply with their one man, one vote edict. Therefore, ipso facto, Florida now had to be redistricted and a new election had to be held all over again, and that post haste. The real reason, I suspected, was that the Jewish power establishment did not like the complexion of the new legislature and that too many candidates had unexpectedly been elected over whom they had no control, such as Ben Klassen, for instance.

Especially Ben Klassen.

I had been attacking the Supreme Court as well as the United Nations during my campaign, and when the Supreme Court intruded into our State's election procedures with their heavy hand, I was furious. I immediately spread the word among the legislators, both House and Senate, that we should ignore the Supreme Court and tell them to go to hell. I suggested that we stand on our States Rights as spelled out in the Constitution and defy the Court. I soon filed a resolution in the House to that effect.

On Monday, Jan. 23, 1967 there appeared a major article in the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel that stated my position fairly accurately. The headlines were large with letters 3/4 of an inch high. "Klassen Hits Edict Of Supreme Court." Then the sub-headline stated "1-Man, 1-Vote Scored". Since this article describes my position better than I can recall it from memory, I quote it in full:

Broward County state legislator Ben Klassen challenged the U.S. Supreme Court's right to throw out Florida's apportionment plan and announced Sunday he has filed a resolution in the State House of Representatives asking that the body carry on with the state's business in spite of the Supreme Court ruling. The resolution, filed by Klassen, a Republican, for consideration by the House during its regular session in April, states that the U.S. Supreme Court is "exercising an arbitrary and unconstitutional exercise in raw power in declaring the present legislature illegal. . . "

It asks that the House invite U.S. Senators Spessard Holland and George Smothers to testify as to the validity of the one-man, one-vote decree of the Supreme Court.

It seeks creation of a House committee to study four matters regarding the high court-

* The extent and limitations of the court's powers.

* A 1962 report by U.S. Sen. James O. Eastland staling that the Supreme Court has decided in favor of Communist causes in 90 percent of its decisions affecting Communist activities.

* Whether the origins of the one-man, one-vote decree emanates from the United Nations or the United States Constitution.

* What measures can be taken by the states to prevent further "serious and dangerous erosion of state's rights and the sharp increase of dictatorial centralization of federal power in Washington."

Klassen said he wants to see Sens. Holland and Smothers testify to the State House as to the validity of the one-man, one-vote decree - because the U.S. Senate is not apportioned by the one-man, one-vote principle. With two Senators from every state, representation varies as much as 80-1 on a population basis, Klassen said.

"If one-man, one-vote is not the law of the land, which of course it isn't, then the senators would be under compulsion to answer to us why they aren't taking any action to curb the Supreme Court from forcing an unconstitutional edict upon us," Klassen said.

His resolution states that nowhere in the U.S. Constitution is the federal executive or the U.S. Supreme Court given any jurisdiction over the electoral processes of any of the sovereign states or over the structure of their governments, nor is there any requirement of the "arbitrary one-man, one-vote edict decreed by the Supreme Court."

The resolution would have the legislature state "that the legislature is convinced that the Supreme Court is not acting in good faith; that it is not trying to solve the reapportionment problem, but to compound it and prolong it indefinitely; to reduce or destroy the rights of the sovereign State of Florida and further aggrandize and concentrate the federal power of a central government." Klassen said it is his hope that such a resolution, if passed, would create "sufficient commotion" so that the U.S. Senate and Congress would be forced to take action.

* * * * *

The wimpishness of the legislators and the senators amazed me. Despite the alarm I tried to stir up, nobody seriously thought of challenging the Supreme Court, although we had every legal right to do so, and should have done so. But, outside of myself, nobody did. They all took it submissively as if the word had come down from on high and God had spoken. The primary was set for February 28, which gave us little time to file, to organize, and to campaign.

I did not relish mounting another campaign. I had to make up my mind in short order whether I wanted to run again at all, and if so, what seat I would want to seek. After much soul searching, I decided to run, and decided I might as well go all out and run for the Senate. There was more prestige and more clout in being a Senator than a Legislator. There were only 48 of the former, and 118 of the latter.

I decided to run for Senate District 37, in which case I would be challenging incumbent Republican James Gregory. Although he was a personable fellow, he was nevertheless a lightweight, a drifter and an alcoholic. I remember vividly when shortly after the election all the newly elected Legislators and Senators had a big bash and get together in some large meeting hall in a hotel in Tallahassee where the liquor was free and flowed freely, and Jim Gregory was stoned to the gills. When he staggered out of the hall his tongue was hanging out and he had to be supported by two of his aids. I thought to myself, the Senate deserves better than that.

Whereas prior to the November election there had been a dearth of Republican candidates and no competition in the primaries, the tables were now turned in February of 1967. Since we "pioneers" had taken the gamble and shown that Republicans not only could win, but in fact, had an edge, the field now became crowded. Instead of just Gregory there were now five Republicans vying for that one seat (including Gregory and myself.)

There was, furthermore, a completely new element hurled into this election. The Jewish establishment had not called for a new election for nothing. Whereas they had slipped up last November and put their money on the Democratic candidates, who had lost, they were now going to make damn sure they got their hand-picked candidates in there this time around, even if they were Republicans. In order to implement that job in Broward County they brought in a professional hired gun from out of state.

They imported a professional campaign manager from Colorado by the name of Dick Kirk (no relation to Claude Kirk). Dick Kirk had just successfully completed the gubernatorial campaign for Republican John A. Love and helped make him governor of Colorado. Now he came to Broward County to make sure the "right" Republicans were elected here, and I was not one of the favored.

It was amazing how quickly the word spread as to who was in and who was out in the cold. Whereas we all got out to campaign and speak, there was now jubilant applause for the favored, a cold chill for those who were not. And this even from my former comrades in arms with whom we had campaigned so harmoniously and had shared so many congenial occasions in Tallahassee. But the chill was there and it was obvious.

Even the Birch Society evidently had received the word from the Jew high command, although at that time I was still naively unaware that this outfit was organized for the sole purpose of running interference for the Jews. Whereas in November I had seemingly had the full cooperation of my Birch comrades, now suddenly out of nowhere appeared a disrupter, a nobody, who was not even a member of the Society. His name was Bill Partin, and he was head of a small electrician's union in Broward County. He had done his best to throw a monkey wrench into J. Herbert Burke's election in November, but the latter nevertheless won the Congressional seat from Broward. Somehow Partin now managed to start a squabble in the Birch Society which split their support for me right down the middle. Knowing what I know now, I can clearly understand their game, but at the time it both puzzled and aggravated me.

I had little time to get organized and furthermore, I was unwilling to spend much money on this second go around. I made up bumper stickers, a number of cardboard posters and an ample supply of flyers. I also installed a set of telephones with a recorded message and ran a number of newspaper ads. But the odds were stacked against me. At the last minute the Republican group headed by hired gun Dick Kirk delivered their most telling shot. They sent out a mass mailing to all the registered Republican voters of Broward County with a suggested "official" list of candidates to vote for. Each category contained only one name their picked candidate. My name, of course was not on it. The only name (out of five Republicans) for the Senatorial seat in the 37th District was that of Charles H. Weber, the picked candidate of the Dick Kirk machine. When I got on the telephone to talk to some of my formerly faithful, they naively would tell me, "Yes, Ben, I'm with you. I just got the official Republican list. I'll be voting Republican, you can bet on that." I had to patiently explain that of course you'll be voting Republican. Since this is a primary and your are registered as a Republican, it is the only way you can vote. But for which Republicans are you going to vote? The list you got in the mail is a partisan list and my name is not on it. Are you going to vote for me? Then the said voter was vastly disturbed and puzzled. "Oh, I didn't understand that. I thought we Republicans were all together." And so it went. Most voters didn't have the foggiest idea who was who. The damage had been done. My workers, few in number could only call a very small percentage of the confused voters. Meanwhile, with the little slip of preferred candidates in their hand, the Republican voters went to the polls and voted mostly as the "professional" hired gun had programmed them. Charles H. Weber, who had done nothing in the previous campaign in November, was in, beating out even the incumbent, James Gregory. I came in third out of five. The "professional's" ruse had worked perfectly. I felt cheated and was mad as hell.

My only consolation was that in my own precinct in Lighthouse Point where people knew what I stood for, I was the runaway winner.

The morning after the election I had the honor of getting the biggest headline I had ever received during my entire campaign. There at the top of the front page in the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel was a big black headline as in a funeral announcement, KLASSEN, CONDON DEFEATED. The Jews smelled blood and were licking their chops.

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Milestone Forty-Three: A Family Tour through Europe
The Summer of 1967

After having lost out in the Republican Primary elections on February 28, I walked away from that debacle with mixed feelings, (a) I was disgusted with politics as such. (b) I was relieved to have no further commitment in that whole tawdry and expensive business. I decided on two unrelated moves, (a) I would go back into the real estate business again and recoup my diminishing reserves, and (b) I would temporarily forget it all and take my family on a wide-ranging trip through Europe. When my wife and I took a six-weeks trip to Europe in 1962, I promised my daughter Kim, who was eleven at that time, that we would make another trip to our ancestral homeland and the next time we would take her along. We promised that it would be in a few years from then and that she would be able to appreciate it more when she was a little older.

Now, in 1967, I felt that this was the opportune time to make good on that promise. Kim was 16 now, a beautiful young lady who could now enjoy such a trip to the utmost. Besides, I felt that after all the strenuous politicking I had been through I needed to get away from it all, and there was no time like the present, before I got too involved in real estate. It seemed like this was the perfect opportunity. No sooner said than done. We went to see our local travel agent and signed up for a 30 day European tour. We had our family passport picture taken, and applied for our new passport, with all three of us on the same passport. Since we would be room sharing, two to a room, we decided that rather than have Kim share a room with some unknown during the trip, why not ask Henrie's Aunt Lenora if she would like to come along. Aunt Lenora was delighted that we asked her. She had been a nurse in the Navy during and after W.W. II. After retirement she had married another Navy retiree by the name of Corliss Dean and they lived in Claremont, California for several years, but now in 1967, she was a widow, having lost her husband in 1965. A trip to Europe was just what she needed to cheer her up. She came to Florida ahead of time to join us before we all took off. On Monday, June 12, Kim, Henrie, Aunt Lenora and I took off from Miami International Airport on BOAC Flight #674 at 5:30 P.M., about half an hour later than scheduled. It was drizzling outside, but in short order we were above the clouds and in bright sunshine. Somewhere below there was an ongoing tropical storm, but sitting in our beautiful BOAC you wouldn't know it.

At 6:10 P.M. we landed in Nassau and back in the rain again. However, we stayed in the plane. We watched them loading our dinners, so we knew we were going to eat before we reached Bermuda, our next stop.

It was still light when we reached Bermuda. Since we had some time before take-off, we all got out and walked around in the airport to pick up some of the local atmosphere. After about half an hour we took off again, with 136 passengers on board.

We knew that our sleeping time would be shortened considerably because of the change in the time zones, so we bundled up with a blanket each and dozed off. Meanwhile the plane was cruising at 33,000 feet.

Tuesday, June 13.
We were awakened for breakfast at 1:45 A.M. (Miami Time) and the horizon to the cast was already becoming light. After a very smooth flight we arrived at the London airport (Heathrow) at 9:30 A.M., London time. The sun was shining brightly and it was a beautiful day. In no time at all we were through immigration and customs. We had a long bus ride through the countryside and through the city, riding in one of those bright red double-decker buses that are so typically British. Kim and I rode on the top, outside deck. In recalling the event Kim remarked how thrilled she was to be riding in such a strange contraption and seeing London for the first time. Arriving at the City Terminal, we were met by an American Express representative who had collected our respective pieces of luggage. He put us into a taxi and dispatched us off to our hotel the President.

We arrived at the President at 11:40 A.M., but since our rooms were not ready we waited until 12:00 noon at which time our luggage was carted up to our rooms. When we entered, the prior occupants' luggage was still there, so back to the lobby again. Fifteen minutes later we got the all clear signal and went into our respective rooms. But what was this? The other peoples' luggage was still there.

Meanwhile, we went back down again, and the hotel served us with tea and excellent chicken sandwiches in the lounge to assuage our frazzled nerves. Finally, the housekeepers moved the unwanted luggage into the hall and we settled in. We were in Room 138 and Kim and Lenora in Room 140. After taking a nap, Henrie and I took a long walk around the environs of the city. Back at the hotel we met our tour director, a Mrs. Gerda Ostertag, from Germany, and the other members of the tour. At 7:00 P.M. we all got on a nice bus and drove to 'The City Pride" pub, where we had an excellent English dinner. We had a choice of 3% beer or 5% hard cider, and we chose the cider. It was real crisp and nippy. The dinner consisted of a delicious soup, excellent roast beef, veggies, and apple pie with cream over it. After a short tour of the pub it was back to the hotel. Henrie especially appreciated the two fat down pillows and the down comforter we each had for our single beds after a strenuous day.

Wednesday, June 14.
Back to "continental breakfasts" - hard rolls, jam and coffee. Henrie skipped the hard rolls and jam and had coffee only. At 9:00 A.M. our group assembled punctually in the same bus we had had the night before, and with a city guide by the name of Emily Lawinski (obviously not a native born Britisher, but a real doll) we set off for a city tour. Emily was from Poland and she and Kim got along real well with Emily calling Kim her adopted daughter. Our first stop was the Tower of London. There were such crowds waiting there we simply didn't have the time to see the crown Jewels. Henrie and I had seen them on our previous trip in 1962, but Kim and Lenora were very disappointed. We did see the famous ravens again, which have the run of the place. (Legend has it that when the ravens are gone the British Empire will go down the drain. I wonder if they are still around.)

England was having a heat wave at this time, the weather being real hot, especially for cool old England. We are off to Buckingham Palace to see the changing of the guard. But for some reason the mounted guard did not parade today. Could it be the heat? Anyway, we are all disappointed, especially Kim and Lenora. Henrie and I did see them on our prior trip. In fact, we seemed to have seen quite a bit more then than we are seeing now.

At night we went to the famous Palladium to see a vaudeville show. They had a comedian, several outstanding acts and a chorus of beautiful dancing girls, all of which all four of us thoroughly enjoyed. However, I still remember the comedian having some skit about a toilet seat with an ostrich feather. Evidently it tickled Lenora no end, because she seemed to have the time of her life and I can still hear her laughing her head off.

After the Palladium, we had a night tour of the city. One thing that impressed Henrie and me was the change in the skyline and all the tall modern buildings that had been erected since we were here five years ago.

Kim was especially impressed when we crossed the famous London Bridge. She remembers it as all lit up and very beautiful, and that we also passed a place where every rich and famous family's coat-of-arms are recorded and stored.

Thursday, June 15.
This was a free day, one we had to ourselves without any scheduled projects by the tour. Henrie kept some notes and for the next few days, as long as her notes last, I am going to quote her verbatim. These are her notes.

We had a late breakfast. Then we all went to the National Galleries to see their wonderful paintings. While Ben stayed there to spend more time studying the paintings, Lenora, Kim and I left to go shopping.

We were trying to hall a taxi when Emily, our London tour guide, happened to come along in her little car. What a dear she is! Kim sat in the front seat, and Emily told me half a dozen times that if we ever got tired of Kim she would like to adopt her as a daughter. Ha! Emily drove us to a big department store where she let us off. Here we had a snack of strawberries with delicious thick cream on them. The butter and the cream on fruit here is so good!

We next went to Carnaby Street where all the Mod shops are. Wow! Lenora made a valiant effort to be broad-minded and kept saying she'd "go along with a gag." Kim bought a mini-mini skirt, a bright red kilt with all pleats in the back and also a pair of pants hose (pantyhose?) We then went into the lovely Liberty store and Lenora bought a nice blouse.

Going up the elevator in the store, Kim met a girl from Australia. She was so sweet and pretty. She said she would be visiting here in England until Christmas. She told Kim she had a pet lamb and a pet kangaroo back in Australia, and that the two pets sleep together. Kim and her new friend got along real well and they exchanged addresses and promised to write to each other.

Kim really attracts a lot of attention, and I notice the boys are giving her the eye. We met a lady at the Palladium who was from Jacksonville, Florida, and she told Ben what a lovely daughter she thought we had.

Lenora kept waving for a cab and we finally flagged one down and went back to the hotel, where we joined with Ben. Lenora decided she had had enough and would stay and rest. Kim changed into her new hose and mini-skirt and the three of us walked down to the British Museum. We saw the Magna Carta and the Rosetta Stone. Kim was especially interested in old religious books that were in Latin. Am so glad she enjoyed the Galleries and the Museum. While at this Museum, Kim was quite self-conscious about her mini-skirt, and one of the guards who was seated on a chair keeping his eye on all the visitors, made several comments about how shocking it was that all the young girls were wearing these "outrageous short skirts".

We next went to the Lyons Corner House and had an excellent roast beef dinner. It is a huge place and has several dining rooms. Ben and I ate here when we were in London five years ago. We went into the "Carving Room" as we had done before, where you can carve your own large slices of roast beef and help yourself to the veggies and other goodies and the waiters bring you your appetizer and desert.

After dinner we picked up Lenora at the hotel and we all walked to the Palace Theatre and saw the stage operetta "The Desert Song." How we all loved it! After we arrived
back at the hotel at 12:30 midnight we got our things packed to leave early in the morning 7:00 A.M.

Friday, June 16.
We were called at 6:30 A.M., had breakfast at 7:30, and were on the bus at 8:30. After our leader, Gerda Ostertag, reminded some of the group about the keys they had not turned in, that some had not paid for their room service bills, and that some of the bags were still unmarked, after all that was settled, we were finally off a good 15 minutes later.

It took a long time to get out of London, the largest city in the world, we were told, with a population of ten million. The countryside was lovely, everything green and many flowers. The day was overcast, which I liked, making it cooler. We are now headed for Dover, and on our way we drove over much hilly country. On top of one of those hills stood the ruins of an old Roman castle. How those Romans did get around!

After having a good lunch at the Port of Dover we boarded the steamer (ferry) at 11:30 A.M. The ferries are run by the Belgians and hold about 200 or more cars. The Port of Dover is a very busy take-off point, since it sits at the narrowest point of the channel. One man told me that within a fortnight there would be 42 ferries a day going back and forth.

As we left the port, Kim was especially impressed by the beautiful and famous White Cliffs of Dover, enhanced by white seagulls sailing overhead. She soon attracted the attention of some of the sailors aboard, some of whom were trying to entice her to come down "below" with them, an offer she discreetly declined. Those were the days, she says.

Kim and I took our last airsickness pills, so I fared pretty well in what was a rough crossing. Some people were seasick before we reached the other side. However, Lenora, being an old sailor, just loved it, but I take a dim view of boats. Kim and some of the other kids were all over the ferry. The pills had made me drowsy, and I slept during most of the four-hour crossing.

BELGIUM. We arrived at Oostend in Belgium, and after going through customs, we were introduced to our nice new bus that will be our partial home for the entire trip.
The driver is a very young chap, only 23, and I understand he speaks only Flemish and German.

It was raining and we got started an hour late. Finally we arrived in Brussels, where we checked in to the Brussels Hilton Hotel. What a lovely hotel! After arriving we were treated to a short sightseeing tour of the city, where among other things, we visited a lace making shop along a cobblestone back street. Finally, we had a late dinner at the hotel at 9:00 P.M. Ben and I were assigned room #604 and Kim and Lenora to #501.

Poor Kim! She finally got her hair washed, but when she plugged in the hair dryer, the heating element immediately blew up. The voltage here is 220. We did have an adapter, but no converter, and Kim wasn't aware of the difference. At least her hair is clean. Ben and I walked the streets until 11 P.M. We were looking for a pharmacy, and when we finally found one it was closed. However, we did get to look in the windows of some beautiful dress shops.

Saturday, June 17.
We were called at 7:15 this morning, and off at 8:30. We drove through the city of Antwerp, and again, as in London, we were amazed at the huge modern structures that had been built since we had been here five years ago, and the number that were under construction at present. The countryside is lovely. All the cows and the huge Belgian horses look so fat and contented and well cared for. Many of the country homes are quite large, they have thatched roofs, and are just beautiful.

HOLLAND. We cross into Holland and see many of the famous Dutch windmills. The fields are lovely and well cared for. We see many little garden houses where city dwellers keep their tools and work clothes when they come out to work on their tiny plots of land, where they raise flowers and vegetables.

On our way to Amsterdam we saw "The Hague" and the Palace of Justice again. We arrived at Amsterdam at 2:30 P.M. and checked into the Palace Hotel. It is very nice. We immediately have lunch before we even go to our rooms. Our rooms, #114 and #115, are across the hall from each other. They are good size and we have a big bathroom.

Ben and Kim went for a boat ride on the canals. Ben also wanted to go to the Fine Arts Museum and see Rembrandt's famous painting, the Nightwatch, but by the time he finished with the boat ride the museum was already closed. I had a headache and stayed in the room and wrote a letter to mother. Lenora went to bed she has a slight cold.

When Kim came back she and I went shopping for about half an hour. After changing some dollars for Dutch guilders Kim bought a pair of wooden shoes. I bought some Delft shoes for a charm bracelet for a friend, and a letter opener for Ben for Father's Day tomorrow. The flower vendors along the street have such beautiful flowers. After getting some postcards and airmail stamps, we had to rush back to the hotel and get ready for dinner.

We had a very nice dinner in the lovely hotel dining room, which had huge mirrors and crystal chandeliers. A man at the piano played all the American songs we liked, but he could not speak English very well.

After dinner we did some more shopping in the little shop in the hotel. I bought a couple of lovely hankies from Switzerland, two windmill charms for Kim as gifts, and a box of chocolates for Ben for Father's Day.

Sunday, June 18.
Early call this A.M. at 6:30. Bags out in the hall, breakfast done with and on the bus at 8:20 A.M. Since this is Sunday and the traffic is light, we were able to get out of Amsterdam and onto the highway in very short order. We drove through the lovely countryside of Holland. So many little colts and so many Shetland ponies with their tiny little colts. We saw two baby Shetland ponies nibbling each others necks. So many sheep, too, with lambs, and cows with calves. The fields of grain and other crops are so lush and well tended, and there are so many lovely trees.

GERMANY. We soon crossed into West Germany. Again, the fields and the trees are just lovely. We drove on into the Ruhr Valley with all its industrial plants. It being
Sunday, many of the people were out from the cities and working in their little garden plots with cute little houses in which they keep their tools and work clothes.

We arrived at Cologne where we had lunch in a very picturesque beer cellar. From there we walked about a block to the fabulous twin towered Cologne Cathedral. It is so high and the outside is sculptured in a way that reminds me of black lace.

For some reason, here is where Henrie's notes end. In summarizing the rest of the trip, I am relying on our composite recollections, and the itinerary, a copy of which Kim fortunately retained. I am especially interested in Kim's Impressions, since this was her first trip to Europe at a most impressionable age. To continue:

From COLOGNE we drove to BONN the capital of West Germany. Here we visited the house where Ludwig von Beethoven was born on December 16, 1770. It was a beautifully cool and sunny day as we drove along the Rhine to COBLENZ and then a side trip to nearby BAD EMS, a health spa. We checked in at the Diehl's Hotel in Coblenz for the night.

Monday, June 19.
In the morning we drove to BOPPARD and boarded a steamer for a cruise on the RHINE RIVER, a most inspiring sight. We saw many ancient and picturesque castles half way up the banks, but most of them on top of the hills. Many were in ruins. The banks themselves were terraced with an endless number of vineyards that added much to the beauty of the river landscape.

Disembarking from our cruise we were back on our motor coach again and off to WIESBADEN, to FRANKFURT and WURZBURG. It was a long day and we finally arrived at the ancient and historic city of ROTHENBURG, where we checked in at a quaint old inn called Der Goldener Hirsch (the Golden Stag.) It had a large glided sign of a stag over the entrance as its emblem. Most of the inns and motels in Rothenburg had some kind of structured emblem out front, symbolizing their name, and most them were in gold or glided color. The sun was just setting as we arrived and the driver just barely managed to maneuver the bus through the narrow gates.

Tuesday, June 20.
Rothenburg is an ancient but beautiful post-card city, most unique and most German. In the morning we took a walking tour of the city. We visited the town square with its famous tower. It has a mechanical arrangement which re-enacts an historic event of the middle ages, during the Thirty Years War. It shows the mayor downing a tankard of ale, which, if he could do it at one sitting, the town's people would be spared. He did it, and the town was saved, or so the story goes.

Henrie and Kim bought some beautiful candles and other items, then had lunch at the inn.

We left in the afternoon and traveled on to MUNICH, where Verena Ostertag, the tour director's daughter joined us for the next five days of the tour. She was four years older than Kim and they soon became fast friends. A year later, in fact, Verena came to visit us in Lighthouse Point, Florida. We did some sightseeing in Munich, then headed for the Austrian border.

AUSTRIA
We reached SALZBURG late in the afternoon and checked in at the Europa Hotel. That night we had a lively evening of entertainment and merriment at the Stelgelbrau Beer Keller. We participated in a folk dance held in a large hall with both men and women decked out in their colorful Tyrolean costumes. Kim was especially popular with the male dancers, with one fellow having his eye on her. Lenora speculated he probably had a wife with ten kids at home, trying to dampen the affair, but Kim said she had a ball.

Sunday, June 20
We had a free morning in Salzburg. We wandered through the town square where we saw the statue of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. We also saw the house in which he was born. Since the setting of the film "The Sound of Music" was laid in Salzburg we also made it a point to see the palace that was the centerpiece of the movie.

Then on to VIENNA
We checked in at the modern Hotel Intercontinental,

Wednesday, June 21.
First on the agenda was an early morning tour of the Schonbrunn Castle, the immense palace that was the home of the Habsburg Emperors. Had lunch in the countryside in
the hills of Kahlenburg at a quaint inn. Returned to the hotel via the VIENNA WOODS.

We stayed in Vienna for three nights and two days. Here are some of Kim's impressions in Vienna. About the Schonbrunn palace "What a place!" then, "We saw the Spanish Riding Academy and the Lippizanner horses. I was alone at the hotel when dad called me and asked me to take a taxi to the Art Museum. (Kunst Historical Museum) I soon got there after a wild ride. The building itself was beautiful, so were hundreds of paintings and exhibits. Saw the historic St. Stephens Cathedral. That night we went to the Staats Opera, a majestic building, and saw the opera "Turandot". Lenora and I had great seats on the very top balcony (there were three) and were practically hanging from the chandeliers. Morn and Dad had seats on the ground floor near the front and center. We waved at each other."

The last night our tour went to a suburb of Vienna called Grinzig, where it is traditional to have a festival "tasting" new wines. While there we were entertained with folk music and songs. While walking back to the bus along the road, Lenora had the misfortune of twisting her ankle, poor thing.

Saturday, June 24.
After three nights in Vienna, we took off for a leisurely drive south past KLAGENFURT and along the shores of the WORTHERSEE to the city of VILLACH. Here we stayed at Park Hotel. Villach has been immortalized in the well-known light opera "The Merry Widow" by Franz Lehar.

Sunday, June 25. ITALY.
Leaving Villach we passed through many quaint and picturesque villages on our way to VENICE. Arriving there we checked in at the Park Hotel. (Same name as at Villach, but an altogether different setting.)

Here is what Kim recalls about Venice. "Our whole tour went on a gondola ride one evening. The troubadours sang songs as only the Italians can. I could hear dad shouting from across the water, requesting they sing "O Solo Mio." We saw the Campanile Tower in the San Marco Square, many beautiful cathedrals and the Bridge of Sighs."

We also saw the Doges Palace, the Grand Canal and several other sights.

Monday, June 26.
Off to FLORENCE. Here we stayed at the Londra Hotel for two nights. Kim noted: "Saw the beautifully sculptured brass plates on the doors of the baptistery, which are often referred to as The Gates of Paradise. This is part of the sculptures of di Ghiberti in the 15th century. "At one place we ate, I had a special desert given to me by a cute waiter. Aunt Lenora complained why wasn't she given the same treatment?"

We also visited the Medici Chapel, the Cathedral and Baptistery of St. John, the Ponte Vecchio (bridge with many shops) and the Pitti Palace or Uffizi Art Galleries.

Wednesday, June 28.
We left Florence and drove south along the Autostrada del Sol to NAPLES where we did some sightseeing. Kim's impressions of Naples are as follows: "I remember all the lines of laundry hanging between rows of shoddy apartment houses, and that they had schools for pickpockets."

We drove on to SORRENTO, on the Mediterranean coast, where we checked in at the Cesare Augusto Hotel.

We stayed two nights. Quoting Kim: "We had a spaghetti dinner in Sorrento. ' From Sorrento we scooted across the water in a hydroplane boat to the unique Isle of Capri. We took an excursion to the inside of the Blue Grotto. I had my bathing suit on, and with a little push from dad, I went over the side of the boat and swam around in its silvery waters."

Leaving Sorrento we took a tour to ancient POMPEI to view the multitude of interesting ruins that had been excavated over the years. Then on to ROME.

Friday, June 30.
Arriving at Rome, we checked in at the Residence Palace Hotel, where we stayed for three nights. In Rome we took in St. Peters Cathedral, the ancient pagan temple called the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain, the Vatican Museum and the Catacombs. Kim and Henrie attended a fashion show one night.

Monday, July 3.
On to PISA, where we stayed one night at the Pisa Duorno Hotel. Here's Kim's account:
"Went up the coast and saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Naturally, we climbed to the top. Then dad and I arranged a scenario where it looked like dad was holding up the leaning tower with one hand to keep it from toppling, and I took a picture."

Tuesday, July 4
Kim continues: "We went up the coast to GENOA, Italy. Then on to MONTE CARLO, MONACO. We visited the casino there. Then on to NICE, France. I was going to buy a bikini there, but I chickened out."

We stayed at the Napoleon Hotel at Nice for two nights. Then, Kim remembers, "We went on to Cannes where we stopped to buy some perfume."

Thursday, July 6.
FRANCE.
Our itinerary wound along the coast of the FRENCH RIVIERA, past ANTIBES, then stopped for lunch in CANNES where we also visited a perfume factory. We then proceeded through the FRENCH ALPS to GRENOBLE and AUX-LES-BAINS, where we stopped in at the Albion Hotel for the night.

Friday, July 7.
SWITZERLAND.
Driving via ANNECY (France) we cross the border into SWITZERLAND at GENEVA, where we check in at the posh Intercontinental Hotel.

Saturday, July 8.
In the morning we take a city tour of GENEVA, and see the United Nations building and other points of international interest. After a great lunch at the Intercontinental, we drive along the shores of LAKE GENEVA, taking time out at LAUSANNE for a city tour. From Lausanne we cross the Alpine mountains to INTERLAKEN, then traverse the BRUNIG PASS and reach the resort city of LUCERNE. We check in at the deluxe Palace Hotel, where we stay for two days.

Sunday, July 9.
We have the day at leisure, but we are quite busy making the rounds in all the different shops, since Lucerne was and is designed for tourist business. Henrie and Kim each buy a Swiss watch at Buchers. Here is what Kim has to say about Lucerne. "We went up to the Swiss Alps and checked in at Lucerne. One of the highlights was taking the cable car trip up to the top of MT. PILATUS. We horsed around with some of the younger group and had a snowball fight there in July during which I lost my new watch which I had received for my birthday. We took a narrow gage railroad on the way down. The view, the countryside, and the Swiss cows were all very memorable. The day was cool and cloudy. We stayed at the lovely Hilton Hotel." (Actually the Hilton Intercontinental was at Geneva.)

Notable among the "younger group" Kim refers to was a young, very blonde 18-year-old fellow by the name of Craig Fielding. He and his mother were from New Braunfels, Texas. He was studying to become a missionary. The last night in Geneva we had a lively bash - a big dinner party with all the Swiss accoutrements. Alpine horns, yodeling, music and dancers.

Monday, July 10
FRANCE.
We started out early for a long day's drive to PARIS, 'The City of Lights," as the French like to advertise it. We were to stay at the Hotel de Paris for the next three days, the final wind-up of our trip. Kim's recollections are as follows:

"From Lucerne to Paris in one day. Lenora was smitten and took a shine to a French border patrol. In Paris, we took in most of the sights, including a trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower. We saw the show at the Moulin Rouge, and I had a sampling of some French champagne. I didn't particularly like it. At a luncheon we had at the Café de la Paris, dad refused to pay for a salad we were charged for, but were never served. On the last night we had a farewell party and dance, then the next day we flew back to Miami and home."

Kim also brought back a large 20-page booklet of the Moulin Rouge's program of the show. It looked pretty good then and it still looks great, not the least of which were all the tall beautiful girls and their elaborate costumes. Even when they appeared topless, the costumes were still terrific. So were the topless.

Thursday, July 13.
Kim's last comment: "We arrived back in New York, and then flew to Miami, on July 13, 1967. It was undoubtedly the most interesting, enjoyable and educational experience of my young life."

Against the Evil Tide - 45

Next Back Home

Milestone Forty-Four: Pines 'n Palms Ranchos and the American Opinion Bookstore
1967 to 1973

Even before I left on the European tour in June of 1967, I had already made some far-reaching decisions as to what future course I should pursue, now that I had split with the Republican Party. By no means was I though with politics. It was just that I had lost all confidence in the two major parties, the Republicans and the Democrats. I was still firmly attached to the John Birch Society and my concern about the country going to hell in a hand basket was as strong as ever. Moreover, my concerns were now more and more directed to the racial situation, an issue that was heating up, and one that the JBS deliberately seemed to be ignoring. I was becoming increasingly attracted to the cause being espoused by George Wallace, the then governor of Alabama.

When George Wallace back in 1962 "took a stand in the schoolhouse door" in defiance (or so it seemed) of the Federal government's strong-arm drive to integrate the schools, and confronted Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach, I sat up and took notice. I had been fascinated by this little man's antics ever since, and now that I had been thoroughly disenchanted with the Republican Party, I came to agree with Wallace that the two parties were alike as two peas in a pod, and that there wasn't a dime's worth of difference between the two of them. I felt strongly that both the Republicans and the Democrats were in cahoots in selling this country out to the communists. Also, I was becoming increasingly alarmed about how the niggers in this country were taking over in their "Civil Rights" program and were granted one major concession after another. What could I do about it? I didn't know, but I was groping for some answers.

I decided I would go back into the real estate business and at the same time I would somehow step up my activities in politics as well, in one way or another. I had no clear picture as to what the solution might be. Perhaps joining the Wallace movement was the answer. I got together with my old buddy, Austin Davis, who had been such a big help in my campaign for election to the Legislature, and also when I ran for the Senate seat. We were both closely involved in the John Birch Society, and our political and racial concerns were pretty much on the same wavelength. Since we worked together real well, I offered him a partnership in my real estate business, although his only experience related to this kind of endeavor was that he was a building contractor, owned some warehouses and a sixteen-unit apartment building. Nevertheless, I felt that in our political pursuit we needed each other and could accomplish more as a team. Having made that decision, the first thing we did was to engage an attorney by the name of Ralph A. Hauser and form a corporation. We called it Pines'n Palms Ranches, Inc., and we received our incorporation papers from the State of Florida dated May 18, 1967. I was President, Austin was Vice-President and my wife was Secretary-Treasurer.

After I returned from my European trip in July, Austin and I scouted Pompano Beach for suitable office space, and finally rented two parallel offices at 884 and 886 North Federal Highway, taking out a five-year lease. These offices were located in a shopping center that had about two dozen other small businesses going at the time. We decided one office (884) would serve as our real estate headquarters and in the other (886) we would set up an official JBS bookstore - the American Opinion Bookstore. It would also serve as our political headquarters. We installed our own air conditioning units in both offices and had an interconnecting door cut through the wall between them. Starting with the latter half of 1967, my activities were now equally divided between building up my real estate business on the one hand, and promoting the bookstore, the Birch Society, and politics on the other hand. Both emanated out of 884-886 North Federal Highway, and with a doorway between the two I shuttled back and forth as the spirit moved me.

Since these entitles were, of course, of an entirely different nature but nevertheless closely interwoven, I believe in the interest of clarity it is best I treat the two activities separately. I will briefly describe the real estate business first and get it out of the way, so that I can concentrate more fully on my then prime interest the political ventures, which had a way of shifting, changing and growing as time went on.

Having settled into the two offices and having incorporated our real estate business, we now scouted for a section of land to buy so we could subdivide and sell. I had been in the acreage business between 1960 and 1964, and it was now our intent to pursue a line of activities similar to what I had been doing before I closed my office on Atlantic Boulevard in March of 1964.

With the help of a broker by the name of Joe Thompson in Naples we found and purchased a suitable section of 640 acres at what we considered a reasonable price. We then set about preparing it for subdivision and marketing.

It had been more than three years since I had been in the land sales business, and now getting back into it, I found that the rules and regulations had changed considerably. As always, when dealing with governmental agencies, things had become much more complex and complicated. Whereas formerly we had to deal with the Florida Real Estate Commission only, we were now faced with not only one, but two new regulatory agencies. First, there was the newly created Florida Land Sales Board, out of Tampa, Florida. Duplicating and overlapping it was the also new federal agency out of Washington, D.C., namely the Department of Housing and Urban Development, also known as HUD for short. It had a huge branch agency of its own called the Office of Interstate Land Sales, with its own complex set of rules and regulations. If a company was engaged in selling more than 50 parcels and some of those sales were to out of state buyers, it was mandatory that such seller register with both the Florida and the Federal agency. This we did, since it would be impossible not to have some buyers from out of state. All this took a considerable amount of time, expense and red tape.

In the meantime I sold out the parcels I still had on hand from my previous subdivisions, which due to the grandfather clause, were still in good standing under the previous registrations.

Finally, by the first of 1968, we had all our legal requirements taken care of and started selling. Austin Davis still had his warehouse business and his apartment building with sixteen rentals to take care of. It soon became obvious that Austin's contribution to the sales of land was somewhat less than great and more than deplorable. In fact, I was doing all the selling and his contribution was nil. Who needs a partner like that? I offered to buy him out. After some haggling, we came to an amicable agreement and Austin was no longer in the land business. I had it all to myself. However, he was still very much with me in our JBS activities and all the political promotions we were pursuing. He would drop into the office practically every day as we continued our promotions and endeavors, and he paid half the rent on the bookstore.

Soon I hired a real good secretary by the name of Mary Childress. Her husband was with the Pompano Beach Fire Department, and although Mary was not with the JBS, she was also politically motivated. Soon we had a morning routine going whereby Mary would fix coffee and raisin bread toast at about 10:30 and we would all sit around a card table in the bookstore and have a political confab, usually joined by some outside visitors who might wander into the bookstore.

My business prospered. These were the Nixon years and business was good. By August of 1968 I bought another large parcel of 1145 acres with one mile of frontage on Highway 84 that connected Naples and Ft. Lauderdale. In this subdivision I built three and a half miles of roads leading south from Highway 84, and surveyed and staked it into highway frontage lots, 1-1/4 acre and 2-1/2 acre parcels.

I kept on buying more land. In March of 1969 I bought another section of 640 acres. While in the process of negotiating this piece the news broke that the Miami Port Authority had purchased 39 square miles of land in the eastern part of Collier County and were now planning on building a major international airport, located about 35 miles west of Miami. Immediately land prices in the area started skyrocketing and I ended up paying three times the original asking price.

By 1969, my accountant and my attorney persuaded me that I should break my business up into six different corporations, in order to reduce income taxes. This I did, but whether it really helped me or not, I was never quite sure, but I do know that both my attorney and my accountant benefited considerably thereby.

During these years I kept on buying more land. In July of 1969 I bought another three-quarter of a mile of highway frontage on 84. It consisted of 480 acres, and this property I kept for some time, and later deeded it all to the Church of the Creator. It is from the resale of this property that most of the funds were derived for the building of the church, the school, and all the multitude of expenses involved in the promotion, the printing of the books, and a multitude of other expenses.

In 1971 I became more interested in property in North Carolina, and in May of 1971 my wife and I bought a lovely piece of property about nine miles north of Franklin. It consisted of 54 acres and had several hundred feet of frontage on a rushing trout stream by the name of Burningtown Creek. We thought we might build a summer home there some time. However, I next found an opportunity to buy 160 acres about 13 miles south of Franklin, just north of the Georgia border. Here we did build a summer cabin in 1974, and later I subdivided part of it and deeded the rest of it to the church. It is this property on which the church and the school were later built, and our present rebuilt dwelling stands.

In April of 1972 I bought some five-acre ranchettes in a subdivision in Palm Beach County. It catered to people who liked to keep a few horses for their own riding pleasure. Then I turned my attention to the Colorado mountains and my wife and I bought a 160-acre ranch that was complete with canals and irrigated pasturelands. It was located in that most scenic area of Colorado, near Ouray, in the beautiful San Juan Mountain Range. We thought we might build on it some day, but we never did. However, we did take a number of enjoyable trips to Ouray and other parts of Colorado over the next several years.

In April of 1973 I bought another 90 acres of highway frontage on 84, about seven miles east of Naples. I put in some roads, surveyed and subdivided it. It is the last piece of property I bought in Collier County.

This completes a brief resume of my business activities up to and including 1973. Between 1960 and 1973 I was inactive for three years. During those ten years that I was active in real estate, I estimate that I negotiated some 2500 transactions, and I am proud to say that in all those deals I never sued anybody, nor did anybody ever sue me. During this period there were a number of other lesser deals, and later on I did buy an apartment house, a warehouse and some other properties, but that is another story. Let us now get back to politics and to the bookstore.

* * * * *

After the mixed support I had received from the Birch Society during my campaign for the Senate, I began to have similar feelings toward the Society, namely mixed. Nevertheless, what with the bookstore as a center, I now had more to work with and I worked harder than ever for the cause. What that cause now had become was not too clear, but it was no longer in harmony with what Robert Welch and the Birch Society preached. What that cause had now become was more diversified and extended into a number of directions, but it was nevertheless as urgent as ever. I realized more than ever before that something was wrong, and I was groping for answers. I no longer believed that the Birch Society had the answer, but then on the other hand, I didn't know of anyone who did.

During the next few years after opening up the bookstore in 1967, Austin Davis and I looked into a number of other organizations for answers. We still had our regular JBS Chapter meetings, we showed the J.B.S film "Anarchy, U.S.A." to any and every group who would sit still and listen. We showed the film in our bookstore, or we would show it at their meeting halls to police officers, civic groups, firemen, or whomsoever.

But there were a number of things that now disturbed us about the Birch Society. Forced busing of school children was coming to Broward County, and it was causing a major uproar. The JBS took no stand on integration, which, of course, meant they condoned it. In fact, they took no stand on the race issue, period, which meant that they were covertly covering for continued race mixing. They vigorously condemned anyone, including any of their members, who dared to mention the Jews. All this puzzled me and aggravated me at the time. It had not yet dawned on me that the Birch Society was specifically organized by the Jews for the sole purpose of neutralizing all those militant White people who might organize effectively and expose the Jewish conspiracy.

Austin and I were looking into other groups and organizations. We were taking "The Thunderbolt" and reading their material, put out by the National States Rights Party. We were subscribing to Gerald L. K. Smith's "The Cross and the Flag" newsletter, put out by his organization, "The Christian Nationalist Crusade" out of Los Angeles, California. We looked into the Citizens Councils of America, who had a program similar to the Birch Society, but who were very much race conscious, such antipathy being directed mainly to niggers, but no mention of the Jewish conspiracy. We followed Richard Cotton's "Conservative Viewpoint" out of Bakersfield, California. He also made a number of radio broadcasts, in which he took on the Federal Reserve and the Jews. Later I met with Richard Gotten at a meeting in Ft. Lauderdale. I also corresponded with James H. Madole, of the National Renaissance Party, out of New York, who was strongly racist, but mixed it with a certain amount of mysticism and other hocus-pocus.

Finally, Austin and I made it a point to go see some of these people. We took a trip to Ocala, Florida to go see "Dr." Oren Fenton Potfto, who called his organization the Christian Nationalist Church. He had a strong Nazi message in which he almost deified Adolf Hitler. But unfortunately it was also strongly interlaced with Christianity and other hocus-pocus. Furthermore, he was a Mason. When we left Ocala, we were convinced that this was not it.

We took a trip to Augusta, Georgia, to see the "headquarters" of the Nationalist States Rights Party. All we found was a ragged card on the door of an office which said "J.B. Stoner, Attorney." Later we did visit Stoner and Dr. Edward J. Fields in their new location in Marietta, Georgia. We talked to both and found their program had some merit. Sometime later Austin and I took the trouble to attend one of their annual meetings. We flew into the Cincinnati Tri-County Airport and attended a meeting of about 200 followers out in a field or hilltop south of Covington, Kentucky. We were not impressed and felt we had wasted our money in making the trip.

During all this time I also attended some (about three or four) of the Klan meetings in Ft. Lauderdale. I was, in fact the main speaker at one of them, held in Hollywood, Florida.

We had also contacted the Citizens Councils of America out of Jackson, Mississippi and their racial position appealed to us. On our invitation, Leonard Wilson, a representative of the C.C.A., came to visit us at the bookstore, and advised us how we could form our own chapter. On his suggestion, we did just that. I was beginning to have some savvy as to how to form a corporation without the expense of a lawyer. For $30.00 I filed incorporation papers with the State of Florida for the Broward County Citizens Councils of America, Inc., with our headquarters at the bookstore. On June 13, 1968 we received our charter from Secretary of State Tom Adams. I was President, Elmer Nicks was Vice President, Mary Childress, Secretary, and Austin Davis the treasurer. Listed in the charter were a dozen names of those who were our founding members.

We held regular monthly meetings. Since the Citizens Councils were strong supporters of George Wallace and his campaign for the presidency, the forming of this chapter was really a supportive move for the promotion of that campaign. However, since my involvement in the George Wallace campaign was considerable, it really belongs in another chapter.

Against the Evil Tide - 45

Milestone Forty-Four: Pines 'n Palms Ranchos and the American Opinion Bookstore
1967 to 1973

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Against the Evil Tide - 46

Milestone Forty-Five: The George Wallace for President Involvement 1967-1969

For several years George Wallace, the perennial governor of the State of Alabama, had been making noises as if he were running for the presidency of the United States. By 1967 those noises were beginning to attract serious national attention. This was the decade of rebellion and civil strife. The niggers were burning down large sections of Watts, Detroit, Washington, and any number of other major cities. There was that stupid war in Vietnam and the rebellion against it. Personally, as integration and civil rights had become what I considered a national outrage, I began to pay more attention to what George Wallace was saying. After my experience with the Republican Party, his claim that there wasn't a dime's worth of difference between the two major parties echoed my own sentiments.

Instrumental in building the Wallace movement was an intriguing character from California, a sort of a kingmaker, by the name of William K. Shearer. Sometime in the late spring of 1967 he contacted me and about four other like-minded people in the State of Florida about forming a third party headed up by George Wallace. I was receptive to the idea. It was not a new idea. The Klan, members of the Citizens Councils, and even a number of conservative Birchers had been talking about it for some time.

Soon after my return from the European trip I received a letter from Shearer inviting me to a general meeting to be held in the Holiday Inn, at Marianna, located in the Florida panhandle below Alabama. The date was August 19, 1967. There was a good-sized turnout and Shearer sketched out the details of our program.

William Shearer was a good speaker and a capable organizer. He was tall, then probably in his late thirties, had a blonde mustache and was walleyed, meaning that his eyes. Instead of focusing on an object, diverged in two different directions so that you were never quite sure whether he was looking at you or somebody else on the other side of the room. Now, in hindsight some twenty years later and in reviewing his subsequent activities, I strongly suspect that he was then, and is now, an agent provocateur whose job it is to organize, then neutralize, large segments of the White Race in the pursuit of useless causes.

Shortly after I returned back home, Wallace gave a speech at a banquet in a large ballroom in one of the major hotels in Miami. The date was August 29, 1967. I went to hear Wallace and although he sounded a bit too Southern and plebian, he was a convincing speaker, and what he said made sense to me. In the opening paragraph of his speech he said, "A basic purpose of government is to protect the life and property of its citizens. No nation can endure if, for any reason, it ceases to serve the purpose for which it was created." He pounded away at law and order, and the willful failure of the Federal government to maintain such.

I had long ago made up my mind to join the Wallace movement and I now set about to take meaningful action. After my experience in campaigning for the Legislature and then for the Senate, I had developed a certain rapport with the news media and reporters and getting them to broadcast my views. Checking back in my "Wallace" file, I find I have collected a goodly number of clippings which chronicle my involvement in the Wallace campaign during this period, and I am going to rely mostly on those clippings to tell the story.

An item in the Ft. Lauderdale News dated August 31, 1967 under the headline "Klassen Resigns GOP Job", it says, "Former State Rep. Ben Klassen announced today he has resigned from the Republican executive committee as committeeman and will "very likely" join a third party in working to elect former Alabama Gov. George Wallace to the U.S. presidency."

Further on down the column it quotes me as accusing the local and national GOP party of deteriorating "to the point where today it is in collusion and collaboration with the Democratic Party in selling out America."

Prophetic words. Further on down, the article concluded with quoting me "My country comes before party. I feel I can best serve my country by working for the election of Gov. George Wallace to the presidency of the U.S. in 1968. I am sure that overwhelming millions of Americans will follow the same course of action and will choose to stand up for America."

On September 15, 1967, the Miami Herald had a big headline in its Broward Peach Section (the paper was of a light peach color) in which it said "Five Bolt GOP Ranks to Back Wallace in '68". Above it was a smaller sub-headline "Klassen Gains Supporters" and below the main headline another sub-headline "Republican Future Success Dimmed by Manpower Loss."

My picture appeared with both the August 30 and September 15 articles.

I was soon attacked by the leaders of the Broward Republican Party, new chairman Davis W. Duke and also finance chairman Gray Boylston.

A letter I wrote to the Sun Sentinel, published September 27, is headed "Wallace Offers Choice", I say about Boylston "Presumably he doesn't like the Wallace platform: 'Stand up for America'." Further on I say "Probably Boylston prefers such pro-Russian positions as taken by leading GOP conservatives (?) such as Dirksen, Hickenlooper and Dominick in ramming through the Consular Treaty which allows the Russian Gestapo to set up headquarters in all our major cities to commit murder, treason and sabotage with complete immunity from our laws. Boylston evidently favors Dirksen in collaborating with L.B.J. to turn over our lifeline, the Panama Canal, to the Communists." There is more, but space will not permit.

In an article of September 23rd published in the Ft. Lauderdale News, I took on Florida State Chairman William Murfin. Under a headline at the top of the page and spread across seven columns, it states "Klassen Blasts State GOP Stand on Wallace", with a sub-headline about it stating "Stand Up For George, He Says." The article quoted me as raising the question, "Where, when and on what major issues has the Republican Party leadership ever tried to effectively oppose L.B.J.'s Great Society programs? Klassen accused the GOP of aiding and abetting "trade with the Reds". He said Republican leadership has helped Johnson "ram forced integration down the throats of the American people" and he asked "could L.B.J. have launched his orgy of unlimited spending without the help of the GOP"? Hasn't the GOP leadership helped promote the federal juggernaut in taking over control of our local schools?" There is more.

On October 18, 1967, an article appeared in the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel entitled "Klassen Raps Duke Remarks on Faction Backing Wallace" in which I am quoted as saying "Republican leaders are not half as worried about L.B.J. winning as they are worried about Wallace winning." This was in answer to Broward Chairman Duke's remarks that the Wallace faction would help re-elect Lyndon Johnson.

On October 20. 1967, William K. Shearer, from California, called for all the party faithful in Florida to meet in Orlando in order to organize the Wallace party. An article in the Sun Sentinel headed "Wallace Unit Taps Klassen", states "Ben Klassen, Lighthouse Point, Sunday, was elected vice chairman of the state committee supporting former Gov. George Wallace for president." Chairman of the state committee for Wallace is Dr. William C. Douglass, Sarasota." There was some discussion as to what the name of the new party should be. "Klassen said the organization did not adopt a party name, but two names were discussed. One, The Constitution Party, is already registered. The other name discussed was Stand Up for America Party."

This issue - a party name - was, and continued to be a contention in the Wallace campaign. For any individual to get elected, such individual has to belong to and be registered with a specific party, a party that is officially on the ballot of that state. For a new party to get on the ballot, a certain number of registered voters have to sign petitions and present them to the State Board of Elections, or whatever body has the authority to place a party on the ballot in each particular state. The laws vary with each of the different states, and the percentage and the minimum number of petitioners required also vary. But unless a party is on the ballot, all the political activity in the world is of no avail. Wallace never did formalize a particular party name and the individual states were left to flounder for themselves. Whether Wallace and Shearer left this issue up in the air deliberately is a moot question to this day. Even more ominous, Wallace himself remained a registered Democrat in his own native State of Alabama. This whole question as to what party we were working for became a major issue, and, as we shall see, more so as time went on. Nevertheless, along with millions of others, I kept plugging away for Wallace, never realizing the party issue never would be resolved. My daughter Kim and I went to hear Wallace in Palm Beach, met with him, and I had my picture taken with Wallace. Austin and I went to hear him again at Cape Canaveral. We arranged a number of party meetings with supporters at our Bookstore, and kept promoting the "Wallace Party." I gave a number of speeches at other gatherings, such as the Klan at their barbecue, to the Toastmasters, to the Citizens Councils, and to other groups.

An article dated March 5, 1968 in the Miami Herald had a headline across the top of Page 4 BR which said, "Wallace Will Carry Broward, Aide Says." Here are a few excerpts from the article:

"LIGHTHOUSE POINT: The move to put Gov. George Wallace in the White House is gathering momentum in Broward, Wallace's Florida vice chairman says.

"Ben Klassen, who wears a second hat as local Wallace chairman, claims the husband of Alabama's governor will carry the Broward presidential vote.

"With a pocketful of polls and statistics, Klassen said recently that 78% of Broward Countians favored Wallace in a television poll. Other polls showed that the American independent Party is the county's second, not third, party, beating out the Republican Party. "

"Frankly, I'm amazed at the number who voted for Johnson in 1964 that Goldwater couldn't have touched that now support Gov. Wallace," Klassen said.

"They are highly concerned about the anarchy and disregard of law and order that the administration is doing little about. . . "

There is more.

About that time some members from the Klan came into my Bookstore and said they were holding a major rally for Wallace at the Odd Fellows Lodge Hall on April 27, 1968. They would like to have me billed as the main speaker. I agreed I would accommodate them, but asked also that we (the JBS) show our feature film "Anarchy U.S.A." during the day. We all came to a happy agreement and on Saturday, April 27, we did indeed hold our meeting to an overflow crowd of about 200. We showed "Anarchy" twice during the day and I gave about an hour-long speech in the evening. The meeting was considered a major success.

Another clipping I have says that on October 19, 1968 I represented the Wallace Party in a three-way debate at the Thomas Aquinas High School in south Fort Lauderdale, where the students staged a well-planned political convention of their own. Representing Nixon and the Republican Party was Norman Roettger, a Ft. Lauderdale attorney, and head of the Broward Nixon for President Campaign. Hubert Humphrey and the Democratic Party were represented by Robert Curtis, another attorney, and Democratic Executive Committee Chairman for Broward County.

Before that meeting, some of the black students staged a protest that Wallace, the alleged segregationist, should get representation at all. However, we all spoke our piece, about 15 minutes each, and the convention itself was relatively orderly. H. Wm. Christie, whose brainchild the convention was, commented "both in his speech and in the press conference later, Klassen surprised students with his honest statements on his feelings about segregation. "

"Everyone's equal to a degree" was the gist of his words, Christie observed. He said the students who interviewed Klassen had expected him to cover up his feelings, if they were segregationists." (I am still quoting the Miami Herald.)

In the vote that followed, "A majority of the St. Thomas Aquinas High School students cast their votes for Nixon at the climax of the school's mock political convention.

"Hubert Humphrey barely edged out George Wallace, in spite of demonstrations by Negro students prior to the start of the show." (Miami Herald)

By this time my own patience with Wallace's lack of meaningful organization and resolving the registration of a party name on a nation-wide basis was beginning to wear thin. True, he was making a lot of noise throughout the nation. He was getting a tremendous amount of favorable publicity, much more than he warranted. But was he making any effort to really translate all this into meaningful political action? He was not, and it seemed almost deliberate. We in Florida had been promised Wallace bumper stickers and other literature, but none was forthcoming. Wallace was still registered as a Democrat. Sometime in the beginning of November 1967, Dr. Wm. C. Douglass, who was Florida Chairman of the Wallace party (also known as the Constitution Party), along with Col. G. M. Nelson, a former Florida State Legislator (who predated my time) and myself, decided to confront Wallace and his aides in their headquarters and get a few answers.

The three of us flew into Montgomery, Alabama and knocked on the door of his H.Q. office. Despite the fact that Dr. Douglass had made arrangements for the meeting in advance, Wallace was not there. In fact, nobody of significance was there. After cooling our heels for about two hours, we finally got to see Joe Fine, Wallace's national campaign manager. Joe Fine was a Jew. In fact, he even bragged about it. He gave us a lot of meaningless sweet talk, but no answers. He assured us that Wallace and his staff were not racists (So what in the hell was the whole campaign about, I wondered.) He said they had repeatedly been accused of being racists, of being anti-Semitic, but, he answered his critics, "I'm a Jew myself and I am Wallace's campaign manager." He had a big smile on his face.

However, I was not smiling. With a staff like that, I thought to myself, what in the hell was I doing in this camp? All three of us left to return home. We had no answers, but personally, I had a lot of re-thinking to do.

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Milestone Forty-Five: The George Wallace for President Involvement

1967-1969

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Against the Evil Tide - 47

Milestone Forty-Six: The American Independent Party
1969

Next Back Home

As the new year of 1969 was ushered in, I had mixed emotions about Wallace and the "George Wallace" Party. Our visit to Montgomery had been revealing, to say the least. Was Wallace for real, or was he nothing more than a stalking horse, a diversionary tactic set up by the liberals and the communists? (I was still in the Birch Society and viewed all evils as emanating from hidden communists in government and the news media.)

However, my concern about what was happening to our country was as urgent as ever and I was looking for solutions. I wanted answers. I was more convinced than ever that the Democrats and the Republicans were selling us out and leading us to disaster. Therefore, Wallace or no Wallace, we needed a good Third Party. Other than slumping the country and promoting Wallace, "our leader" made no concerted effort to form a real third party, had not even decided on a uniform name. In the November, 1968 elections his supporters worked under at least six different organizational names. The "Wallace" parties did receive 9,897,141 votes out of 73 million cast, 13.53% of the total, and received 45 of the 538 Electoral College votes. Evidently the public sentiment and support for change was there to be organized and harvested. But was Wallace really trying to organize and do something with that sentiment? It seemed he was not. One of his closest aides, Bill Jones, out of Montgomery, said Wallace had no plans for the 1972 presidential elections.

However, I went ahead and organized the American Independent Party (AIP) in Broward County. We requested and obtained permission to use the County Commission Chambers in the Courthouse building to hold our meetings, the same as did the Democrats and the Republicans. We held our first meeting on Jan. 24, 1969. I was chairman, Mary Childress (my secretary at the office) was secretary of the party and Austin Davis was treasurer.

At that meeting we passed a resolution in which we condemned the "open space" school, a program the county board was considering in which a group of classes would be in one large room, no walls between classes. We viewed this as "a step toward anarchy, chaos and destruction."

According to an article in the Feb. 6th Sun Sentinel, we also condemned "forced integration of our schools" and "the abolishment of neighborhood schools". We then sent the resolution to the School Board Chairman, Dr. Wilson C. Atkinson.

"The resolution was proposed by Ben Klassen, Chairman of the Broward branch of the party, and was approved by a vote of 26 executive committee members at the party's first local meeting. The party plans to meet once a month," the article concluded.

On February 9, 1969 a statewide meeting of all Florida committeemen and women supporting Wallace was held in Orlando. Dr. Wm. C. Douglass, who was the sponsor of the Birch Society's "Let Freedom Ring" program, had been the original organizer and chairman of the Florida Wallace Party. Prior to the meeting he had urged me to take over the leadership and I said I would be willing to do so if the membership so chose.

The meeting was chronicled in a number of Florida papers: the Miami Herald, the Ft. Lauderdale News, Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel, Bradenton Herald, Tampa Tribune, and the Orlando paper, to name a few. The Sun Sentinel ran a headline "AIP Names Klassen Chairman." The article continued: "Klassen's wife, Henrie Etta was elected secretary of the state AIP executive committee, while Arleen L. Lent of Naples was elected vice-chairman, and L. Alien Greer, Sarasota, was chosen treasurer."

About 50 committee officials were present. "This is not a new party", Klassen explained. "Formerly, for about four years, this was the Constitution Party of Florida. We changed the name about a year ago and filed it with the secretary of state."

Klassen said the "big drive" of the AIP statewide will be for re-registration of voters. "Then," he said, "we plan to qualify the party for the ballot and seek candidates for all levels of governmental offices." Two weeks later William K. Shearer called for a national meeting of committeemen and women from the various states. It was held in Louisville, Kentucky on Sunday, February 23, a meeting in which Henrie and I attended. We flew in by plane. An AP news item in the Sun Sentinel described it as follows:

New Party "Will Save America'
LOUISVILLE, KY. A national group of Wallace supporters formed a third Party Sunday without his blessing and William Shearer of San Diego said "We are on our way to saving America."

The new organization passed resolutions urging repeal of the federal income tax and calling on the United States to pull out of NATO.

It was on the way to approving a U.S. ultimatum to North Vietnam to halt all aggression within 30 days or face "all out war which would involve destruction of the rice crops, thereby bringing peace to Southeast Asia."
End of article.

As I recall, there were parties with different names from the various states. Some, such as New York, even had two different rival parties. Again, no unanimity of a party name, and Wallace gave no leadership. In fact, he wasn't even there.

On April 15, income tax day, our Broward group distributed flyers in front of the Courthouse in Ft. Lauderdale, promoting the Liberty Amendment which would do away with the income tax. An article in the Miami Herald is headed "Anti-Income Tax AIP gets 13 New Members." Further down it says "But when 5 PM came only 13 Broward residents had 'stood up for America' and changed their registration to the party of former Alabama Gov. George Wallace."

"The Liberty Amendment, Klassen explained, "would abolish the income tax over a three year period. At the same time the federal government would withdraw from all federal aid programs and also cancel all operations within the U.S. 'not specified in the Constitution.'"

On April 27, Bob Kunst, representing Florida's "New Party," and myself, representing the AIP, appeared on Broward Celebrity Line, written up in the Miami Herald. It is a long interview, in a format in which each of us expressed our party positions on a number of issues. I will try to give a few of the highlights.

Q. Why didn't you join either the Republican or Democratic Party?

KLASSEN: I once belonged to the Republican Party. But both parties are in collusion today to give us a socialist dictatorship. They've joined to destroy the Constitution they've sworn to uphold and are dedicated to bring this country into a one-world government where we can merge with Communist Russia and other socialist monsters in happy brotherhood under United Nations control.

KUNST: We feel problems hurting us so badly in this country - inequality, slums, poor people starving - are not met by people in politics. We felt we had to offer an alternative . . .We call for freedom and democracy not just for White, Anglo Saxon Protestants (WASPS) but for all Americans.

KLASSEN: The American Independent party believes in individual responsibility Government is taking from the thrifty and giving to the shifty, encouraging parasites and free loaders not to work, taking earnings away from those who are still productive.

A Florida State AIP executive committee meeting was held in Bradenton on June 22, 1969. The Tampa Tribune under the heading "Independent Party Pushes Recognition" the next day reported the following:

BRADENTON. The Florida American Independent Party late last week unanimously voted to institute a legal suit against the state, declaring "discriminatory and prohibitive" a Florida constitutional stipulation requiring 150,000 re-registered voters in order to receive party recognition.

State AIP Chairman Ben Klassen told some 50 state and county party representatives at a special meeting here he would contribute $1000.00 to launch the attempt to be placed on ballots here. The suit will be filed pending raising of sufficient funds, it was decided. (End of quote.)

(Several resolutions were passed, including condemnation of SIECUS, sex education in schools, and there were several swipes at Nixon and Republican Gov. Claude Kirk.)

That same evening we held a banquet at Belro's Restaurant at which Medford Evans was the key speaker. Present were about 200 party faithful. The Bradenton Herald reported the following: "Wallace Party Speaker Urges: Save this Country." It went on, "Urging his audience 'to save this country as it was bequeathed to us by our ancestors.' Dr. Medford Evans of Jackson, Miss., author and lecturer won a standing ovation at the end of his talk on 'The Future of the American Independent Party. "
(End of quote.)

Dr. Evans was a member of both the John Birch Society and also the Citizens Councils. He gave a good speech, but it lacked any meaningful specifics. He praised us for being able to muster some 200 members to a meeting such as this. Things seemed to be going pretty well for our AIP. However, at this same meeting someone warned me that when your organization really gets some clout, look for the disrupters and dynamiters to move in, they'll be sure to come. The prediction proved so true, as we will sec later. After the speech Dr. Evans and his wife, Jimmy Harrison and his wife, and I sat down in one of the booths in the restaurant for a cup of coffee and some intimate conversation. Dr. Evans was an interesting individual of many parts. He had been a doughboy in France during World War 1. Dr. Evans was not only a good speaker, he was also a good raconteur. Soon he was telling us about when he was in Paris during the war he unknowingly walked into a French whorehouse, and he found out what that was all about. But I soon turned the conversation to more serious issues. Since Dr. Evans was one of the most prominent officials in both the JBS and the Citizens Councils, this was my opportunity to ask him some penetrating questions that had bothered me about both organizations, namely in regards to the Jewish involvement in the communist conspiracy and the "civil rights" movement. Dr. Evans blandly fielded the questions as if it were no big deal, and stated that it was "his opinion" that the Jews once had control of the communist regime in Russia, but that they were now out and the Russians were in control of the communist party. I wasn't convinced, but I didn't argue. His evasiveness on the Jewish conspiracy didn't enlighten me any about communism, but it told me quite a bit about both organizations in which he was so prominent, and about Dr. Evans himself.

The following excerpts are taken from the Ft. Lauderdale News dated August 13. Under the heading "AIP Raps Nixon on Schools, Tax" AIP State Chairman Ben Klassen, a member of the county executive committee, said Tuesday the heavy and progressive graduated income tax, registration of firearms, federal control of schools and forced integration as part of Republican programs, has paralleled Marx's Communist Manifesto.

"Consequently, Klassen said, their resolution seeks the removal of the government from the control of schools, and that includes forced integration. He said they also want the income tax eliminated and gun control legislation outlawed.
(End of quote.)

Throughout the spring and summer I had been holding a number of smaller meetings at the bookstore and regular meetings of our Broward County Citizens Councils group. Some of these people were from other racist groups such as the Nazis, the States Rights Party, Klan, etc., and the Jewish question came up repeatedly, a question the Birch Society tried so hard to suppress, but one that to me became increasingly more important. I read Henry Ford's book "The International Jew" again. I had read it about 20 years earlier, but in context of what I was now doing, it really hit home. The worldwide Jewish powerhouse and conspiracy was so obvious that it caused me to become increasingly suspicious about the whole basis and intent of the Birch Society. Why were they trying so hard to deny the existence, cover up and defend the most vicious of all our enemies? And where did the Citizens Councils stand in regard to the Jews? They claimed they were racists, against the niggers, that is. But what about the Jews?

In mid August, 1969 Kim and Henrie drove out west to Colorado to scout arrangements for Kim entering the Colorado State University at Ft. Collins. It was our plan that I would fly out later and Henrie and I would then drive back in the Camaro. Meanwhile, there was a Citizens Council

Convention at their headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi on August 29 and 30. Austin Davis and I decided we would fly out to Jackson and attend that meeting and find out first hand some of their positions on the Jews and other issues. By now we had pretty well written off the Birch Society as hopeless.

Austin and I were impressed with the Citizens Councils' new headquarters building and were hoping for the best. We heard all the speeches at the two-day convention, attended all the banquets. We had brought along some extra copies of The International Jew and were displaying it freely. We talked to several members about the Jews, to solicit their opinions, especially Leonard Wilson, the coordinator who had come to Pompano Beach to help us set of our local C. C. group. He was not interested in "The International Jew" and frankly told us that the C. C. was not at all anti-Semitic, in fact, they had some nice Jewish members. So, we had run into another stonewall.

Meanwhile, back in Florida the word was getting around in the Birch Society, and also statewide to the members of the AIP, that Ben Klassen, Chairman of the AIP, was an anti-Semite.

After the convention was over I flew on to Denver to meet with Kim and Henrie, while Austin flew back to Florida. When I arrived in Colorado, Kim and Henrie picked me up at the airport and we drove back to a motel in Estes Park, where they were staying. It was then that I learned that Henrie had been sick, but she felt better now. However, that very first night she had a very serious and painful attack, and we had to call an ambulance in the middle of the night to take her to a hospital in Longmont, 45 miles away.

Soon she was scheduled for an operation. She stayed in the hospital for more than a week, while Kim and I stayed in a motel. We then stayed in Longmont for another week while Henrie was recuperating her strength. We took Kim to her college to get her settled in. Then Henrie and I started our trip back to Florida, taking our time.

After my experience in Jackson with the C.C., I was more alarmed than ever, and was curious what my old friend and predecessor in the AIP, Dr. William C. Douglass, had to say about the Jews. I called up in advance and made arrangements to have dinner with him in Sarasota, where he resided. We met at a swank restaurant of his choice (he was quite a gourmet.) He brought his secretary with him, but Henrie wasn't up to it and stayed at our motel. We sat down to dinner at about 8:30 and I quickly got down to business. I asked him - what about the Jews? I had tons of evidence, I said, that the Jews were the real instigators of communism, controlled most of the world's finances, controlled practically all of the news media, the governments, in fact, the world.

Bill Douglass was very much on the defensive, and his secretary backed him up by acting as if she was very much shocked that I even brought up the subject. But unlike my encounter with Dr. Evans, I kept pressing and pressing hard. Although we kept it on a seemingly friendly and civil basis, we kept arguing until midnight, when the proprietor let us know that he was ready to close up, much to Dr. Douglass' relief. That is the last time I saw Bill, but I now knew where he stood, where Medford Evans stood, where the AIP stood, the position of the Birch Society, the Citizens Councils, and the whole ball of wax.

I arrived back in Pompano Beach on Sept. 21st, after having been away for nearly a month. Things were piled up at the office. There were contracts to pursue, bills to pay, letters to write. Also those disrupters and dynamiters in the AIP were now surfacing visibly. One was a fellow by the name of Victor Barrett in Broward County. Having originally ingratiated himself and attached himself to our AIP group he now became ugly and threatening. The other (among others) was a very vocal shrew from Naples, Florida, by the name of Arleen (Larry) Lent, who had been needling me for most of the year. She claimed she had been secretary to the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, in Washington, and that she was working on a book about him.
(She never wrote it.)

This brings me to a subject that has puzzled me for all these years. Why would a courageous, intelligent man like Senator McCarthy take on the whole liberal-communist-Jewish establishment and at the same time have not one, but two young Jewish attorneys, namely David Schine and Roy Cohen, as key men on his staff? Didn't he realize that communism was Jewish? And why would he have a secretary like Larry Lent working for him, who, I was convinced, was monitoring his office (as I believed she did our activities in the AIP) and forwarding such information to the Anti-Defamation League? To this day it remains a mystery to me. Poor Joe McCarthy! The Jews destroyed his political career, destroyed his reputation and killed him in the hospital. He went into the hospital with nothing more than the flu, but came out feet first, dead of hepatitis. I am convinced that the Jews gave him a shot that did him in.

A few days after I returned from Colorado, Austin and I sat down at a table in the bookstore for a review of what we had recently learned. We had to make some major decisions, some agonizing re-appraisals of what we had been supporting - the Birch Society, the Citizens Councils, the American Independent Party. Why were they all ignoring the Jewish menace when the evidence was overwhelming that the Jews were the real power establishment behind the whole dastardly conspiracy to destroy America and the White Race?

We called Jim Cochrane, one of the major JBS chapter leaders in Pompano to a conference in the Bookstore and confronted him with the Jewish Issue. He started sweating profusely, and his only defense was - "All the Jews?" meaning that even if it was a Jewish conspiracy we should not condemn every Jew as being part of that conspiracy, just individual by individual, regardless of their race or religion. I said to Jim: Why the double standard? When the "allies" manipulated by the Jews in the mass horror of fire-bombing Dresden to death, killing some 350,000 Germans in two days, they did not selectively spare the women, the children, the little babies or the refugees from the east that were fleeing the communist killers. So why are you all blubber and why are you so goddamn protective of the Jews? That was the last time I ever saw Jim Cochrane.

A few days later we called in Claude Boring, the JBS Coordinator for South Florida, whom we had known for years. We sat him down at the same table in the bookstore and put the same question to him. He, too, sweated profusely and kept chain-smoking one cigarette after another. He came through more frankly than had Jim Cochrane. "Listen," he said, "We all know it's the Jews. Welch knows it's the Jews and so does just about every member of the Birch Society. If we went against the Jews we would be labeled anti-Semitic and that would be the end of the Society." Really? What about your credo that "the truth is our only weapon?" You are sure as hell not telling the whole truth when you totally ignore and fail to expose the most important and powerful enemy in the whole conspiracy, now are you? He could not come up with any logical answer, and Austin and I could come to only one conclusion that made any sense: namely the Birch Society was running interference for the

Jews, all the while pointing the finger at the communists, while the Birch Society itself was a part of the Jewish conspiracy.

My old buddy, Dr. Bill Douglass, joined the dynamiters by circulating a letter in which called me an anti-Semite, and asked for my resignation from the chairmanship of the AIP. I was only too glad to oblige. With a party membership that was still willing to ride on the coattails of a fraud such as Gov. Wallace, who Douglass himself said treated him "as If he had leprosy" and was really bent on undermining any third party movement, what possible future was there in such a set-up? None, I concluded. Not only did I gladly resign from the now useless AIP, but I also tendered my resignation from the Birch Society in a letter to Robert Welch, dated Nov. 5. In that letter I also demanded a refund of my previous $1000 donation that I had foolishly made in good faith. The complete letter can be read and is reprinted in "The Klassen Letters, Vol. One."

Printed in the same book and following the Welch letter are letters to three of the major members of the AIP. On Dec. 5, Dec. 15 and Dec. 18 I sent letters to Dr. Wm. C. Douglass, to L. Alien Greer, and to Jas. L. Harrison respectively. These letters further shed light on the political situation and conflicts at that time.

My resignation from the Birch Society caused considerable commotion among the ranks in Broward County. Undoubtedly, I had been the most active and visible member in South Florida. The newspapers took note. A headline in the Sun Sentinel read "Klassen Quits Birchers, Says Group Too Liberal", and on the same day, Nov. 3, an article in the Ft. Lauderdale News read "Society Becoming Too Liberal For Me, Ex-Bircher Says." About this time also someone called up and told me to tune in on a certain Palm Beach radio station, they were talking about me. I did tune in, and here was my old buddy, Claude Boring, the JBS coordinator for South Florida, talking to some (Jewish talk-show host. I tuned in just in time to hear the Jew ask, "So you're saying that Klassen s anti-Semitic?" and Claude Boring emphatically answering "He is not only anti-Semitic, he is anti-Jewish!" Horrors! In summation, after my experiences and the information I had gathered, I concluded that whereas the Democratic and the Republican parties were not the answer to the White Man's dilemma, neither was George Wallace nor the American Independent Party, and I would not waste my time in that arena any longer. Back to Square One.

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Milestone Forty-Six: The American Independent Party

1969

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Milestone Forty-Seven: Alpine Tour mit Oberammergau Passion Play

Summer of 1970

By 1970 Henrie and I felt it was time for another trip to Europe. In our previous trips we had found that of all the scenery in Europe, undoubtedly the Alpine areas were the most beautiful, and we decided this time we would select a tour that concentrated on those majestic Alps. Besides, this being a decade year, the passion play was putting on its historic spectacle, and we had decided long ago that some day we wanted to see it. So we made the necessary preparations, and chose a tour that combined both.

We chose Olson's Royal Coach Tour that was designated as the "22 Day Imperial Alpine Adventure (Passion Play)." On Monday, July 20, we took Northeastern Flight #20 out of Ft. Lauderdale at 5 P.M and arrived at the Kennedy airport in New York at 7:35. After a short stopover, at 8:30 we took another plane out for a direct flight to Switzerland, arriving in Geneva the next morning.

Tuesday, July 21. The Olson bus and tour guide met us at the airport, and our group all gathered for a get-acquainted breakfast. After a city tour, which included the League of Nations building, the Old Town, and some other interesting spots in this international city, we drove along the shores of Lake Geneva. We crossed into France and arrived at the skiing resort of Chamonix, at the foot of Mont Blanc. This huge granite massif, which is 28 miles long and 9 miles wide, at 15,781 feet, is the highest peak in the Alpine range. We soon checked in at the Cariton Symond Hotel and had a good dinner. It had been a long day since we left New York last night. We were ready for a good night's rest.

Wednesday, July 22. Today we were free to wander around Chamonix on our own, which we did. There is a cable car that goes up the mountain, but since the day was overcast and visibility poor, we did not take it.

There are 44 people in our tour group, a full busload. Most of them are congenial and experienced travelers. Our tour conductor is Tom. He is young, comes from Holland, and is Jewish. There is also an older Jewish couple from Miami in our group. Our bus driver is also quite young. His name is Michelle, he is from the French part of Switzerland, he speaks very little English and is a superb driver.

Thursday, July 23. This morning we started off at 8 A.M. and drove through the 12 mile long Mont Blanc Tunnel into Italy. The tunnel was completed in 1965, and is quite an engineering feat. But the French and the Italians don't just dig a tunnel, they did it with an artistic flair, constructing a very attractive fluted overhang at the entrance. After a beautiful drive through the Aosta Valley, we entered Switzerland again through the St. Bernard Tunnel, which is only four miles long. We had a coffee stop at the entrance to the tunnel and then drove on to Martigny for lunch. After lunch, we drove down the lower Rhone Valley to Visp. From there we took a mountain train ride to Zermatt, one of the most picturesque and fascinating little towns in all of Switzerland. It is surrounded by high Alps and is the gateway to the Matterhorn. We were taken to the Hotel Mont Cervin by a horse drawn bus. It is delightful to hear the jingle of the bells on the horses. There are no gasoline cars in Zermatt, only small electric vehicles and horse drawn carriages and buses. The town is a shopper's paradise and Henrie and I strolled down the main street of the town before dinner to look it over. Dinner at 7:45. The town, the atmosphere, the dinner, all were delightful.

Friday, July 24. Today is another free day, with the option to take the tour by cog railway to the foot of the Matterhorn (at our own expense). We opted to take the tour to Gornergrat, which is the terminal point station for tourists. It was a perfect day to view this most prestigious of all peaks. There was a little cloud hovering several hundred feet directly above the peak, which gave it an aura of distinction. Although the Matterhorn is about 1000 feet lower than Mont Blanc, its granite massif rises so dramatically out of its surroundings that it is the most spectacular of all the Alpine peaks. Some of the most impressive sideshows as we rode up the steep incline to Gornergrat were the number of rushing streams and waterfalls cascading down over the rocky mountain terrain. Arriving back in the late afternoon, we took some pictures of a herd of goats driven up the main street of Zermat, a ritual that is performed twice every day.

Saturday, July 25. This morning we got up early (5:30), had breakfast and then we all walked en masse to the railroad station to catch the 7:30 train back to Visp, where we make contact with our bus again. We noticed there was fresh snow on the Matterhorn. Once on the bus we were now on our way to St. Moritz. It is a beautiful day. The roads are narrow and winding, there are many sharp curves, which our skilful driver manipulates expertly. We drive back into Italy over the Simplon Pass, and along the shores of beautiful Lake Maggiore. We had lunch at a hotel high above the Lake of Locarno, a beautiful spot replete with palm trees and tropical flowers. We arrive at St. Moritz at 7:30. It has been a long day, and although the distance wasn't that great, nevertheless, the thousands of curves make it rather strenuous. We were settled into the Crystal Hotel, not on our schedule, since the designated Hotel Schwelzerhof is being remodeled. The Crystal Hotel is very modern, large bathrooms, heated towels, the whole works.

Sunday, July 26. St. Moritz is a high-class tourist and ski resort. The scenery is breathtaking lovely lakes and mountain vistas. We are free until 10:30 A.M., at which time we boarded the bus and were on our way to Davos, where we stopped for lunch. Then back to our hotel at St. Moritz again.

Monday, July 27. Our destination today is Cortina, Italy. We are now in the Dolomites. The mountains in this area are somewhat different from the rest of the Alps. They are in the shape of tremendous boulders lying on top of, and/or next to each other. They are bare, of fantastic shapes with rugged peaks and very picturesque. On our way, we had lunch at Brunek. We arrived at Cortina at about 6 P.M. It was a beautiful setting.

Cortina lies in sort of a pass, or valley, among all these huge boulders. Cortina is both a summer and winter resort. After we settled into the Hotel de la Poste, we had a real Italian dinner of Minestrone, Veal Scallopine, mashed potatoes, zucchini, and apple cake.

Tuesday, July 28. We are now headed for Austria and the legendary town of Villach, immortalized by Franz Lehar In the Operetta "The Merry Widow." After we entered Austria we continued via Lienz and Spittal and past several beautiful lakes. Villach itself is very picturesque, and typically Tyrolean. Arriving at Villach, we soon checked in at the Park Hotel for the next two nights.

Wednesday, July 29. Our morning in Villach is free. Villach is very near the Yugoslavian border. Our hotel room overlooks a garden. We spent the morning exploring the town and stopped in at a sidewalk cafe to have coffee and Austrian pastries. The weather is pleasant and on the warm side. In the afternoon we all took a bus tour for a drive around the Worthersee, a large and scenic lake.

Thursday, July 30. We are taking off through the pinewoods and the beautiful scenery of the Styrian Alps to Portschach, then to Bruck, where we had a delicious lunch in an old restaurant of the Hotel Bauer. There was an old square piano here and someone in our group started playing it, all of which turned into a general singsong, with most of our group participating.

We arrived in Vienna at about 4 P.M. and checked into the Intercontinental Hotel, a real winner. It is air conditioned and completely modern, yet retains the true Austrian flavor, having such attributes as those lovely crystal chandeliers in the lobby and other public rooms. Our room is on the ninth floor, overlooking the beautifully wooded Stadtpark, which is three blocks wide and five blocks long. The park has a canal running through its center, with five picturesque bridges spanning the canal. After dinner Henrie and I went for a walk in the park, then sat down at one of the tables in the plaza to have coffee and Viennese pastries and listen to an open concert that was already in progress. There were other members of our group also sitting in. A very good orchestra played Strauss waltzes and two young couples in formal dress demonstrated the classic Strauss waltzes. The park at night is like a fairyland with fountains and flowers, and lights on buildings everywhere. From our room on the ninth floor we can see many church spires, beautiful buildings, and the huge, lighted ferris wheel (the largest in the world) in the forested amusement park called The Prater, a huge park, about four miles long. There are no skyscrapers in Vienna, which fact helps it to retain its romantic charm and historic character.

Friday, July 31. City tour of Vienna. In the morning we visited the Inner City, also known as the Old City, which contains the Ringstrasse, the Kartnerstrasse, the famous Opera, and most of the parks, museums and historic buildings for which Vienna is so famous. The beautiful grounds of the Belvedere Palace, which was once the home of the Crown Prince Eugen, is now a museum. The huge Schoenbrun Palace, the former summer residence of the Austrian Emperors, the last of which was Franz Joseph. We went through about forty rooms on the first floor, all of which were highly decorated and contained a multitude of oil paintings. The upper two floors are rented out to various businesses and people. The Hofburg, which was the Winter Palace for the Emperors, and is now also a museum. We also saw the Kunst Museum, a beautiful building that is a work of art in itself, and contains thousands of paintings by the world's most famous artists.

In the afternoon we drove out to the Vienna Woods, which were not as woodsy as I had imagined. We saw the Cisterian Monastery and church, part of which was built in the 12th century. We also saw a children's village for orphans. Nine children of assorted ages live in each very attractive house with a "mother" to take care of them. We then went to Baden, where the Russians have their headquarters, and where the SALT talks are now going on. Baden is a delightful spa, and while there Henrie and I had tea and a sampling of the famous Sachertorte at the Sacher Hotel. Back in Vienna for a fine dinner of Bauerschmaus. After dinner Henrie and I took a taxi to the Light Opera house and saw Franz Lehar's operetta "The Merry Widow", sung in German, of course.

Saturday, August 1. A free day in Vienna. Henrie and I were busy taking a closer and more prolonged look at some of the places we had briefly visited on the tour, but would have liked to have spent more time. We also explored a number of the downtown shops to see what they had to offer.

At night, the tour took all of us to the "new wine" village of Grinzing, on the outskirts of Vienna, where we enjoyed a jolly good dinner replete with folk music and ample samplings of new wine.

Sunday, August 2. The weather here has been hot the past few days and we have enjoyed our nice air-conditioned hotel. But now it is time to move on and we leave at 8 A.M. this morning on our way to Salzburg. On route we stop at the very large, beautiful and famous Cistercian Monastery at Melk. Both the interior and the exterior are real works of art and are one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in Europe. At present the monks supervise many parishes in the area and come here only once or twice a year. One wing of the Monastery is used for Austrian students and another wing for U.S. students on an exchange program. We had lunch at Gmunden, a lovely spot on a mountain lake. Many sailboats were out, and there were numerous swans looking to be fed. Afternoon coffee stop at St. Gilgen on the Wolgangsee, after which we arrive in Salzburg and check in at the Hotel Europa. Our room overlooks the town, with a view of the triple tiers of ancient forts that rise along the slope of the mountain. We walked through an old cemetery to have dinner at Peter's Cellar in the old part of the town.

Monday, August 3. In the morning we go on a sightseeing tour of the Old City with a local guide in charge. The city is a gem of rococo architecture. We viewed the Heilbrun Castle, Mozart s house, the fortress of Kohensalzburg, the Cathedral and the old and new Festival theaters.

In the afternoon the same guide takes us to Berchtesgaden, where we see the ruins of Hitler's chalet, and those of Goering and Himmler, and the tunnels and bunkers connecting them. At a distance we can also see the ruins of Hitler's once magnificent "Eagle's Nest", his private retreat perched atop a mountain peak and commanding a superlative view. I was awed to come into such close contact with history, and, at the same time I felt depressed that such an illustrious landmark in our history had been so wantonly destroyed by the "allied" forces.

After our return to Salzburg, we had a fine dinner at our hotel. Then Henrie and I (and others of our group) took off in taxis to the Mirabel palace where we listened to a delightful string quartet play Mozart-Schubert-Beethoven music, starting at 9:15 P.M. We walked back, and after a long day, were ready for bed.

Tuesday, August 4. After breakfast this morning, we leave for Munich, seeing many picturesque little towns and much scenic beauty on the way. We stop for a lunch of sauerkraut, sausage and song at Munich s famous Hofbrauhaus, where I pick up a beer mug for a souvenir. After a sightseeing tour through the city, we drive through the heady Bavarian Highlands past charming old towns and check in for the night at Oberammergau, a perfect picture-postcard city in the Bavarian style. The hotels here are overbooked, and late that evening we are taken on a long ride across the Austrian border to a little town of Mittelwald, where we are lodged for the next two nights.

Wednesday, August 5. We are now ready to see the famous Oberammergau Passion Play, which is put on only one summer in ten years, a tradition that has been observed for more than 330 years, (since 1634) when the burgers vowed to do so for being spared the ravages of the Black Plague. All the players are local people. The stage is a huge set in the open on the side of a hill, but the seating arena is under cover. The play lasts all day, with a break for lunch. I enjoyed the presentation, although overly long, which was, of course, in German.

Thursday, August 6. We motor through the wooded Alpine hills to Fussen for magnificent views of the Mad Ludwig's castles of Hohenschwangau and Neuschwanstcin. The latter is especially impressive in its classic beauty and was the model for Walt Disney's theme castle at Disney World at Orlando, Florida. On to Garmisch-Partenkarchen, where we have lunch. This is another exquisite village with typical Bavarian chalet houses, each of them having beautiful scenes painted on white stucco siding and gables. Then on to the Zugspitze, a famous ski resort on the German-Austrian border (where I visited with Fred Bieger back in the spring of 1955), then to the famous violinmakers' village of Mittelwald. We are back in Austria and finally arrive at Innsbruck, the Tyrolean capital, for the night, where we stay at the Hotel Arbitrager Hot.

Friday, August 7. This morning we leave Innsbruck and drive along in the River Inn valley through several pretty medieval villages, then across the Ariberg Pass on our way to Vaduz. We have lunch in this unique little capital of Liechtenstein, then again re-enter Switzerland, on our way to Lucerne, where we check in at the Hotel Europa for the night.

Saturday, August 8. We take a morning sightseeing tour of the city, which includes the Covered Bridge, the Lion of Lucerne monument and the Glacier Garden. We are free to shop and wander in the afternoon, all of which we did. At night we are taken to the Kurhaus, a garden restaurant where we enjoy fondue, yodeling and the sounds of the giant alpenhorn.

Sunday, August 9. We leave Lucerne and proceed along the Irridescent Lake of the Four Forest Canteens, the scenic Alpine peaks and along the shores of Lake Geneva as we motor to Berne, where we viewed its beautiful buildings, its flowers, its arcaded shops, the Glockenspiel, and, of course, the bears. Then on to Interlachen on the plain, and to Lausanne, where we check in at the Palace Hotel for the night.

Monday, August 10. We drive along the shore of Lake Geneva to the Geneva Airport for our flight back home. Our plane took off promptly at 10:30 A.M. and we arrived at the Orly Airport in Paris at 11:15. Our Pan Am flight, however, was three hours and 15 minutes late and instead of taking off at 12:30 it was four P.M. before our 747 finally took off. We arrived at Kennedy Airport approximately the same amount of time behind schedule. Luckily, we were able to arrange another flight to Ft. Lauderdale and arrived there in the wee hours of the morning, glad to be back home, safe and sound.

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Milestone Forty-Eight: The Nationalist White Party

1970-1971

In baseball they have a rule that says: three strikes and you're out. I had now struck out three times. But did I stay down and out? Not by a damn site. I had tried to do something within the framework of the Republican Party and found out that they were really in cahoots with the Democrats in selling this country down the river. I had tried to support Gov. Wallace for the presidency and discovered that behind all the ballyhoo he was nothing but a real phony. I had tried to build a genuine Third Party in Florida and found that most of the members (not all) were cither blind to the Jewish control, or afraid to buck them, or worse still, were themselves agents provocateur of the Jewish conspiracy.

But nevertheless, I kept on searching for answers. For most of 1970, Austin and I looked into existing movements that might be genuine and worthwhile joining, but we had already checked out most of these earlier, as I related in MS Forty-four. We had researched and studied the Klan, Matt Kochl's Nazi Party, Gerald L. K. Smith's outfit, and a number of others, and found them completely inadequate. For a while we entertained the idea of supporting the National States Rights Party (they had by now moved to Marietta, Georgia) but they seemed more interested in promoting Christianity than in saving the White Race. A further search turned up nothing that seemed worthwhile. Finally, after my return from the European trip and after a considerable amount of soul searching, I came to the agonizing conclusion that if I were to operate within an organization that meant something, I would probably have to put it together myself. After much deliberation and a voluminous amount of discussion, Austin and I put an idea together that we felt reflected our total philosophy and something meaningful of which we could be proud. We called it The Nationalist White Party. Our creed and program was detailed in our "Fourteen Points." Since these have already been spelled out in The Klassen Letters, Vol. I, (starting on P. 35) there is no need to repeat them here.

Whereas my most vociferous opposition in the AIP when I started exposing the Jewish conspiracy came from the Florida West Coast, now the most enthusiastic support came from a group in the same area. The leader of this group was a lovely young woman by the name of Eleanor Kramer, married to Rudi Kramer, who, when a boy had been a member of the Hitler Youth. However, of the two, Eleanor was by far the more dynamic and enthusiastic leader. Even before we had formed the NWP she came to visit us at our bookstore in Pompano Beach and applauded my stand against the Birch Society. She had found out about it through the grapevine, and she related to us that she had come to the same conclusion, as had we.

By November of 1970 we had the framework of our party pretty well put together, and since by now I was an "expert" at filing for a new corporation, we decided to incorporate our party. On November 3, we received our charter from the State of Florida. The Ft. Lauderdale News took note. In an article dated Nov. 18 and headed "Third Party' Gets Charter", it stated:

Damning an alleged coalition of Blacks and Jews in American politics and finance, a new "third party" to pursue the interests of White Christians has been formed by two North Broward men - one a former Republican state legislator.

The Nationalist White Party, with former state representative Bernard Klassen as its national director, recently was issued a charter as a non-profit corporation by Florida Secretary of State Tom Adams.

In addition to Klassen, Austin C. Davis was listed as assistant director of the party, which has its headquarters at 886 N. Federal Highway, Pompano Beach. Both men are Lighthouse Point residents. Klassen, who ran George Wallace's presidential campaign in Broward in 1968, said the purpose of his new party would be to emphasize that "the White Christian people who conquered America don't intend to be relegated to second-class citizenship. " End of article.

The Jews evidently also took note. Shortly after that article was published, a Jewish gal by the name of B. Jacobson lost no time denouncing us in a letter to the editor, which was headed "Hate and Lies." The letter ended with a paragraph that said, "I personally pray that all thinking Americans reject the Nationalist White Party and its platform of hate and lies."

In answer I wrote a letter that was published in the same paper on Dec. 20, in a caption that asked, "Why not White?"

It stated: "In a letter of Dec. 7 the writer launches a vitriolic attack on the Nationalist White Party apparently for no other reason than that we take a stand for the white race, and are tired of being relegated to second class citizenship in our own country. Evidently it is fine for the Jews to organize a multitude of organizations such as the A.D.L., A.J.C., the Kehilla, etc., all exclusively Jewish and all fanatically promoting the interests of the Jewish Race. It is regarded as a benevolent service to their race when negroes organize the NAACP, CORE, SNCC, and a host of other organizations promoting solely the interests of the blacks. But, strangely, when an organization is formed dedicated to protecting the interests of the white race, immediately the Jacobsons and their type spring into action and hurl accusations, insults and invectives at the White Christian people.

It is further strange that the writer accused our platform of "hate and lies." Since our platform is only now in the process of completion and the writer is totally ignorant of its contents, such words probably best reflect her own position, not ours. Our party is based on love for the white race, not hate, and formed to help protect our people from such outrages as forced busing, among many others.

Ben Klassen
National Director,
Nationalist White Party

Sometime in February of 1971 Jim Guler, political columnist for the Ft. Lauderdale News, came to interview me at my office in Pompano Beach. In an article published in the Sunday edition, Feb. 21, 1971, of the combined Ft. Lauderdale News and the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel, he wrote an article about the Nationalist White Party. The heading was "NWP is to the Right of Wallace." Above the main heading was a sub-heading that said "Ben Klassen Leads Party." The article continued with the following text: There is a law in physics that declares for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

The same is true, of course, in politics. Push the pendulum too hard in one direction and it comes flying back at you.

Seeking an answer to what it saw as a "Communist conspiracy" in the past decade was the right-wing John Birch Society.

George Wallace and the American Independent Party rose up against the liberal extremes of the London Johnson administration.

A patchwork of "New Left" organizations have taken to the streets to criticize the fighting in Indochina as an "immoral war."

The Americans for Constitutional Action is the ultra-conservative counterpart to the ultra-liberal Americans for Democratic Action.

And with the emergence of the Black Panther Party, a small band of black revolutionaries more dedicated to bullets than ballots, it was probably inevitable that we would see the formation of a Nationalist White Party at the other end of the philosophical spectrum.

The Nationalist White Party (NWP), given its state charter last fall, is the creation of a former Republican state legislator who left the John Birch Society because he felt it was sliding to the left.

Ben Klassen, the national director, who helped run Wallace's 1968 presidential campaign in Broward County, said the purpose of his party would be to emphasize that "the White Christian people who built American don't intend to be relegated to second-class citizenship. "

"Jews control most of the finances and the media, and with the Negroes, wield political power far in excess of their numbers," Klassen charges. "Despite the fact the white Christian people outnumber Jews 30-1, the political power is predominantly anti-white, pro-Jew and pro-black. "

He says it is his belief "the white Christians are tired of being pushed around, looted and plundered by an overwhelming tax structure so that millions of blacks can live on welfare, breed and multiply indiscriminately and create more and more freeloaders to further burden already overburdened working whites."

It is his party's intent, he adds, to make race a basic issue in political elections, and to confront candidates with the choice of representing "white Christian people on the one hand or Jews and blacks on the other."

Another aim of the party, Klassen adds, is to instill "racial loyalty" among whites while "uniting them the same as our opponents always have done (among themselves). "

Klassen was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1966 as a Republican, but was unseated three months later when he tried for the State Senate in the special election. He left the GOP, calling it a tool of the "ultra-liberal Eastern establishment" and later bolted the Wallace team because of Wallace's moderating views on segregation.

"Wallace has weakened his stand on segregation over the past eight years," Klassen explains. "In his first inaugural speech, he pledged 'segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever.' But in his recent inaugural address, he didn't mention segregation once."

Where, we should now ask, does the pendulum swing from here?

It was at this time that I designed our logo or insignia, which later became the logo of the Church of the Creator. I first of all drew up the design, then turned my sketch over to a commercial artist, a fellow in Pompano Beach that I knew from our Chamber of Commerce meetings, although I can't now recall his name. As I do recall, however, he only charged us a paltry $9.00.

By February and March of 1971 we finally had our act together and were going strong. We had our Fourteen Points, our logo, and other literature printed in mass, and we were signing up dues paying members. In this matter we didn't exactly start from scratch. I had a number of loyal followers that were with me in the JBS, in my campaign for the legislature, in the Wallace movement, in the Citizens Councils and also in the AIP. And now we also had the new group from the West Coast that was headed by Eleanor Kramer.

We held regular meetings of the NWP at the bookstore. I also made a few trips to the Tampa area and gave speeches to those members on the West Coast. We soon had about 40 members.

Things seemed to be going pretty well, but I began to notice a certain irritant and aggravation intruding into our meetings that baffled me. At just about every meeting there would be some fellow, or some little old lady in tennis shoes, who would get up and harp about the Christianity issue. They would say something like this: "My Savior was a Jew. I can't go against the Jews!" Or, "My bible says that we are all equal in the eyes of the Lord. Isn't it wrong therefore to be against Jews and blacks?"

Another ploy was, "My bible says about the Jews, I will bless them that bless thee and I will curse them that curse thee, sayeth the Lord. How can we possibly oppose the Jews?" I would try to brush off such intrusions and remind them that this was a political party and they could have any religious beliefs they wanted to, but we should not drag them into our political movement. But these kind of disruptions continued. Some even insisted that we should include in our Fourteen Points that this country was founded as a Christian nation. Furthermore, we should make it clear that our party was a Christian party and we adhered to Christian principles. I regret to say that I had inadvertently encouraged this position by repeatedly using the term "White Christian" in much of my literature and in my letters. I had stupidly made the mistake of taking for granted that "Christian and "White" were almost synonymous, when in reality they were terms that were in bitter conflict, and in complete contradiction to each other. Equating the two terms "White" and "Christian", is a treacherous confusion that Dr. Ed Field's NSRP is still perpetrating on the gullible yokels to this very day. The Christianity issue was soon to come to a head.

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Countess Guardabassi was a grand old dowager who lived in her stately mansion in Palm Beach. She had been the heiress to a 50 million dollar drugstore chain fortune, and although as American as apple pie, she had acquired her Countess title by marrying an Italian Count many years ago. The Count had long ago passed on into Nirvana, but the Countess and the title still remained. She was a staunch "conservative" and even hated the Jews with a passion. Although she had no clear-cut philosophy of her own, she would periodically invite well-known speakers to her mansion to talk to a select group of like-minded conservatives. Austin and I attended several such gatherings, and once or twice Henrie was also with us. Enter the General into this picture. During World War II Gen. P.A. del Valle was a military man of some renown, fighting the Jewish war in the Pacific, and in the process leading thousands of White young men to their deaths fighting to preserve Jewish "Democracy." Comfortably retired on his generous pensions after the war, he became a notorious Kosher Konservative in the style of the Birch Society. He formed a post-office box organization called The Defenders of the American Constitution, Inc. From time to time he would give his song and dance speeches about God and Country, the Flag and the Constitution to various groups that would listen to him and pay his expenses. But never would he defend or patronize the White Race, nor would he ever mention the Jewish menace.

On April 4, 1971, he was giving one of his usual speeches at Countess Guardabassi's mansion and Austin and I went to hear what he had to say. After the speech I went up to meet with him and gave him a copy of our "Fourteen Points", along with an application and invitation to Join our NWP.

A few days later, April 7, I received a letter from him. He did not join us, but in a critical paragraph he said, "Another point I would like to know about refers to your membership application. Name, address, telephone number and national origin I understand. But Religious Affiliation (if any) puzzles me. Because no organization such as you propose should be open to non-Christians."

There was that damn Christianity Issue raising its ugly head again! I couldn't understand it. I answered him in a long letter, dated April 13, in which I said, among other things, yes, indeedy, we were glad to welcome members whether they embraced Christianity or not. We had some further correspondence back and forth. I wrote him an even longer letter on April 26, and a final letter on May 12. All of these letters are printed in full and can be read in The Klassen Letters, Vol. 1, and the story followed in more detail. In the second of these letters, namely mine of April 26, the germ of an idea cropped up that was to be the start of a long train of events to follow. That idea is spelled out on P.66, of K.L., Vol. 1, when I said, "General, what the White Race desperately needs is a new philosophy, in fact a new religion based upon the concepts of preserving the White Race, not a rehash of old Jewish shibboleths."

The idea that the White Race needed a completely new religion to promote its own best interests grew within my mind. Not just a political party such as the NWP, but a complete, fundamentally new religion that established new moral values. The moral values we had been accepting and taking for granted were not ours - they were, as I had said, Jewish shibboleths. We needed moral values that reflected the heritage of our own great White Race, not that of the goddamned parasitic Jews. Where could I find such a religion? Much as I searched, there was none that I could find. Could I perhaps structure such a religion myself? I had my doubts.

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The idea of a comprehensive, fully structured racial religion for our people now fully preoccupied my thinking. For reasons that baffle me unto this day, the White Race had never had a meaningful racial religion of its own. To try to find out why at every turn in our struggle for racial Identity Christianity seemed to block our way, I took a new, hard look at this Jewish religion adopted by our people. There had to be something in it, I surmised, that I must have missed. Having had it drilled in to me at Sunday school, and having listened to an endless number of boring sermons in church, I was fairly well informed about the contents of the bible. True, when I was seventeen, I had taken Ancient History One in college, and studied other civilizations and their religions, I had come to the obvious conclusion that Christianity was just another religion among thousands, religions that had come and gone, and was now one amongst the debris of thousands of others that were still around.

However, although I didn't believe in such superstitious claptrap, I wasn't hostile to Christianity as such. Like most people, I accepted that some of its moral values probably had merit, but much of it was nothing more than silly hocus-pocus. Nor did I give much thought to its Jewish origins, and I had no reason to doubt the claim that such a character as Jesus Christ once lived. Like Mohammed and others, I took it for granted that Christ had been some religious fanatic who went around the countryside preaching his wild claims. For some strange reason that I couldn't understand, his stuff had caught on, was then later promoted and exploited by his successors into a powerful movement, I assumed.

Be that as it may, at this particular time my curiosity was aroused as to WHY Christianity was blocking our every turn. I decided to re-read the New Testament and take a closer look to find out just what it was that I had missed. It didn't take me very long to get my answer. Within 10 minutes, I came to Matthew 5, 6 and 7, and the Sermon on the Mount. To my amazement I read, "Love your enemies." "Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor." "Turn the other cheek." "Blessed are the meek." I had read and heard it a hundred times before, but this time I knew what I was looking for and I realized the treachery of the booby-trap that was open before my eyes. This is crazy! This is the kind of suicidal advice you would give your worst enemies if you wanted them to destroy themselves, I thought. Why hadn't I realized that before? How could I have missed the poison in this seemingly benign teaching? And this was the crux of our innermost "faith"? How stupid can you get? How come no one else had pointed this atrocity out to me?

I had now put my finger on the crux of the problem. It now opened the door to a whole plethora of new questions and answers. Christianity was deliberately designed to enslave and destroy the White Race! Who had written all this balderdash? Why, the Jews! All the Apostles were Jewish. St. Paul, the most prominent writer of all was really Saul of Tarsus, another Jew. Christ himself was a Jew, the bible claimed.

I studied further. I read up on Christ in my encyclopedia. To my amazement, the encyclopedia flatly acknowledged that regarding the "historicity" of Christ there was no historic evidence that he ever existed, in fact, all the information we had about him came from only one source, the Scriptures. Wow! That was another major discovery as far as I was concerned. The whole story was a fable, like Mother Goose and Santa Claus. And who wrote this whole shoddy mess? A passel of Jewish scribblers, whose identity is unknown and unverified. Undoubtedly, they were cunning, deceitful and characteristically Jewish, but scientifically these desert tribesmen who wrote the Old Testament as well as the New, were so ignorant they did not even know the earth was round, nor that it traveled in an orbit about the sun.

After these major breakthroughs, more information came flooding in, and the pieces to the puzzle began to fit nicely into an orderly mosaic. I further read Marcus Eli Ravage's piece, "A Real Case Against The Jews", written in 1928. In his article, this audacious Jew openly bragged how cleverly the cunning Jew, Saul of Tarsus, nearly nineteen hundred years ago had conspired a means to torpedo the great Roman Empire by feeding it a self-destructive new religion, namely Christianity. He further chortled how brilliantly it had been conceived and executed. It had succeeded beyond their fondest dreams, he said. He further gloated that by means of Christianity they, the Jews, had conquered us goyim as no people in history had ever been conquered before. "We have put a clog on your progress. We have imposed upon you an alien book and an alien faith which you cannot swallow and cannot digest, which is at cross-purposes with your native spirit, which keeps you everlastingly ill at ease, and which you lack the spirit to either reject or accept in full. "

I further studied the peculiar characteristics of the Judaic religion itself, and that too, was revealing. The Jews do not really believe in, or care about, the hereafter. I found that their religion was basically a tightly organized criminal conspiracy, deliberately tailored to fit their parasitic way of life. It was designed to unify the Jews in an unending war of plunder against the goyim, their term for cattle, but meaning us Gentiles. Their basic goal is now, and has been for the last four thousand years, to enslave the goyim, to exploit them for their own gain, and to usurp unto themselves all the gold, real estate and wealth of the world.

To my horror, I discovered that not only was such their objective, but they had already come a long way towards achieving that sinister goal. But the most treacherous and deadly essence of that program was their obsession for the mongrelization and genocide of the White Race, whom they regard as their most hated enemy. In this, too, they were making rapid and astounding progress, I discovered, much to my alarm.

Why would they want to mongrelize and destroy the White Race? Because, they reasoned ruthlessly, and correctly so, that as long as an intelligent White Race remained, their foul conspiracy could at any time blow up in their face. The White people of the world might discover their foul conspiracy, as did Hitler in Germany, organize and turn on the Jews. They, the Jews, are now sitting on a powder keg, and they know it. Therefore, it behooves them to mongrelize and destroy the White Race as quickly as possible. Once the world population is reduced to a mass of stupid brown mongrels, they are home safe, the Jews conclude. These zombie slaves will then be too stupid to ever organize, or revolt and shake off their slave masters, but will make nice, docile work animals.

I felt I had made as much of a major break-through as if I had discovered a new world. Yes, indeed, what the White Race now needed was a powerful new dynamic RACIAL RELIGION of its own. If a scurvy racial religion such as Judaism could propel a measly, parasitic race such as the Jews into world domination, just imagine what a well conceived; fully structured racial religion could do for the intelligent, creative and productive White Race! So I reasoned. We should also remember that we still number some 500 million individuals, and outnumber the Jews by 30 to 1. Why had no such religion ever come forward before now, I wondered. What a difference it would have made in the demographic history of the world if the Egyptians had had it, or the Greeks, or the Romans! Why hadn't they? Was it perhaps too late now?

No, I decided, it wasn't too late, if we get busy and do now what we should have done long ago. Yes, I decided, I would try to put such a racial religion together. Its basic goal would be the survival, expansion and advancement of the White Race alone and exclusively, barring all others. I would immediately start writing such a book. I felt I was already armed with a whole warehouse full of potent ideas upon which such a religion could be built, and new concepts kept flooding in.

Austin Davis at this time was still regularly attending Pastor Wes Auger s Calvary Baptist Church, and considered himself a born-again Christian who would some day go to heaven. As I discussed all these newly discovered ideas with him, he tenaciously kept defending Christianity. After all, he argued, it was the White Man's traditional and well-established religion. Maybe so, I countered, but it was invented by the Jews, rejected by them and foisted on the White Man, and look where they are today, and look where we are. I kept working on him. Finally, one day as we were sitting in the bookstore drinking coffee, I asked him, do you really believe we should love our enemies, such as the Jews? That you should sell all thou hast and give it to the niggers? That you should turn the other cheek? Finally Austin broke down and answered honestly. No, I don't. From that day on he was completely de-programmed from all that Christian garbage and became one of its most vociferous critics.

As I contemplated writing my book, I asked myself, what should be the basis of our beliefs? What could I trust and really believe in? When I was a kid I had been deceived about Santa Claus, but after all, that was only child's play. I had also been snookered about our basic religion, Christianity, from early childhood, I now realized. That was not child's play - it was a major and lasting deception. That I did not find so easy to forgive. I had been deceived by the John Birch Society as to what their real goals were. I had been duped by the Republican Party. I had been lied to by George Wallace. I had been deluded and let down by the members of the American Independent Party. In fact, "our" government on the local, state and national level was one big fraud and swindle, manipulated by our most deadly enemies, the Jews.

I asked myself again and again, wasn't there anything firm and real? Wasn't there anything honest and unchanging that I could believe in and depend on? As I pondered the question, the answer came through, loud and clear - yes, there was! I could believe in the Eternal Laws of Nature. I could depend on her laws forever and a day. Having come to that conclusion, a number of other questions and answers rapidly emerged.

What did Nature have to tell us? The answer was much, and everything. One basic lesson Nature taught us was that every species first and foremost takes care of its own, in the face of all hostility and/or competition. Each species seeks to reproduce its own kind, expand its own numbers and territory, and at the same time advance itself genetically in order to better compete in the eternal struggle for survival. Also inherent in Nature's laws was the principle of the segregation of the species. Each species mated only with its own particular species or sub-species. There was no interbreeding. Although bluebirds and cardinals might both be birds, they never interbreed. Although canvasback ducks and pintail ducks both belonged to the duck family, and even built nests around the same lake, they too never interbreed and mixed their genes. Nature forbade it. Any species that flouted those laws was ruthlessly punished with the ultimate penalty - extinction. I came to realize that all knowledge and wisdom was derived from a close observation of the Laws of Nature, and even though the lesser animals may not have as highly a developed intellect as man, nevertheless, Nature in her wisdom had imbued them with a highly developed instinct to perform in harmony with her laws. In taking care of their own they usually carried out those laws and their mission in life with a great deal more wisdom and efficiency than did man.

This brought up the question, how was mankind performing in accordance with these natural laws? Specifically, how was the White Race, Nature's Finest and the pinnacle of her evolutionary process doing? When I asked that question in the framework of the last half of the present century, the answer came through loud and clear - we were performing dismally. We were doing far worse than the lowly mosquito, in fact. We were flagrantly flouting Nature's most basic laws, all in the name of a treacherous Jewish religion. Would Nature also punish her Finest with extinction? The answer was a clear and unequivocal yes, we were definitely on our way to extinction unless we rapidly and drastically changed course.

During May and June of 1971 I haltingly started writing my book, stumbling as I went along. I hadn't decided on a title as yet, but was contemplating on one of two options. I would either call it Nature's Eternal Religion, or, The White Man's Bible. I had not as yet conceived the proper name for our racial religion, nor the framework of our organization. But all that could come later. I was loaded for bear and first things first.

* * * * *

While all this was going on in my mind, Eleanor Kramer was setting up a rally and a speaking engagement for me with her Nationalist White Party group on the West Coast. She was still a devout churchgoer, and like most good White people, considered Christianity as the historic and basic religion of all White peoples. I thought the time had now come that I should level with her and share my newly discovered information and ideas about Christianity. On June 16, I wrote her a frank and revealing letter about my position on religion. I sent along with the letter copies of my exchange with Gen. del Valle. (All these letters can be read in detail in The Klassen Letters, Vol. 1.) Since my wife and I were planning a trip up to Canada during July, I thought it only fair and prudent to inform her in advance not to set up any meetings in her area until I got back, and furthermore, until we were clear on this Christianity issue. Otherwise, any rally she might set up could only end in disaster. One thing I don't like is surprises, and I had no idea how she would react. I hoped that she would be able to see what I could see, but then I was no mind reader, and had no preconceived idea what her response, or those of the other members, might be. But I would soon find out, to be sure.

In the meantime, Henrie and I planned our trip to Canada in July.

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Milestone Fifty: Saskatchewan Homecoming

The Summer of 1971

For some reasons (unknown to me) the Province of Saskatchewan designated the year of 1971 as the "Year of Homecoming" and decided to put on much hoopla to promote it. The Universities sent the word out to their alumni, and every other organization decided to get into the act. At this time I still had a goodly number of relatives left in the province, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, but my immediate family had shrunk down to my oldest brother Henry and his wife Annie, who now lived in Saskatoon, and my oldest sister Sarah, and her husband Peter Plett, who still lived near Herschel. It had now been 25 years since I had last left Herschel, Saskatchewan, in the cold, cold midwinter of January, 1946, and the fact was, none of us were getting any younger. (In order to avoid confusion, my brother's name is Henry, originally Heinrich in German, and my spouse's name is Henrie, short for Henrie Etta.) For years my family had been imploring Henrie and me to come back and visit, and now, with the added inducement that everyone would be coming together in the Year of the Homecoming, their pleadings increased. And their point was well taken. It was time to go back and see those who were left. In 25 years the ravages of time had changed much. My parents had died a long time ago, as had many others, and many of the still living I had known were now scattered to the seven points of the globe. But now many of the scattered would be back. Besides, Henrie had never been to Saskatchewan. We decided this was the year.

I called my brother Henry long distance, the first time in 25 years. He wouldn't believe his ears. He insisted it was his son Peter calling from Regina and pulling a spoof on him. I therefore had to spend the first five minutes of my long distance call trying to convince him that it was me, and that we were planning on coming up there this summer to visit with them.

After making all the plane arrangements, we left from Miami at 1:45 P.M. on July 4, and arrived at Toronto at 4:30 P.M. There we changed planes, left for Winnipeg, arriving at 8:05. Another short layover, leaving at 10:25 and arriving at Saskatoon at 10:40 that night. Actually, we had gone through two time changes, and it was by now 12:40 in the morning by Florida time. It had been a long trip.

Henry and Annie were there to meet us at the airport. Henry had changed considerably since I had last seen him, but then, hadn't we all? He had farmed my dad's former farm four miles south of Herschel for the last 30 years, and he had prospered. Two years ago, in 1969, he had retired, and he and Annie had moved to Saskatoon, and bought themselves a nice, comfortable little house at 1704 Avenue "D" North. It was located in the Mayfair district, an area that was quite familiar to me some 30 years earlier, being near where I stayed when I attended the Saskatoon Normal School. Saskatoon, I soon found out, was now the stamping grounds of any number of my relatives and associates formerly from Herschel, many of whom, like my brother Henry, had prospered and had now retired to this magnet city.

There was my Aunt Margaret and Uncle Jacob Wiens, who had raised a family of four boys, Jacob, Arthur, Rudolph and Victor, and two girls, Sarah and Helen. All were now grown and living elsewhere. Uncle Jacob, too, had retired from the farm and he and Aunt Margaret bought a nice house and were living in Saskatoon in the City Park district across the river. We were soon invited over for a big dinner that included many other relatives. Nearby lived my Aunt Helen and Uncle Abe Klassen, who had raised a family of three boys, Jacob, Henry and Ernst, and two girls, Helen and Edith, all of whom were now also grown and raising their own families. Uncle Abe and Aunt Helen too invited us over for a big Sunday dinner. The Jacob Wienses had an interesting story to tell regarding some of our other relatives, who, unfortunately had stayed behind in Russia while four of my dad's immediate family migrated to the New World in the 1920's. (My dad and his family, his brothers Abe Klassen and John Klassen and their families, his sister Margaret and Uncle Jacob Wiens and their family. Left behind in Russia were eight other brothers or sisters and their families.) Two years earlier, in 1969, Aunt Margaret and Uncle Jacob decided that time was running out and they would make one last trip to Russia to see those of their relatives that were still left and they could reach.

This they did, and the efforts and expense to which they went to reach some of their remaining relatives who had now been displaced to the wilds of Asiatic Russia east of the Urals, were considerable. Anyway, they did get to see them, took some group pictures, and came back with some gruesome stories of what had happened to many of our kinsmen in Communist Russia during the ensuing 45 years.

Two doors down from Henry and Annie lived the Peter Krahns, who were busily preparing for their daughter Velma's wedding within the next few days. We were invited to the wedding.

Actually, we were even related to the Krahns, although remotely. The Krahn's son, Werner, was married to my sister Sarah's daughter Gertrude. The Werner Krahns were at this time living on a farm near Kindersley, Saskatchewan, and are still there at this writing, in 1990. The wedding took place on a following Sunday, and it was almost worth coming all the way from Florida just to attend this spectacular Mennonite wedding. Velma Krahn was married to Peter Gunther in the Mennonite church with about 200 guests attending. They made a very handsome couple. At the reception that followed there was much food, drink and merriment, and I had an opportunity to again meet with dozens of old acquaintances and relatives, as well as introduce them to Henrie for the first time. Mrs. Krahn, the mother of the bride, said she remembered me back at a time when we were both teen-agers and started going to parties, and that she remembered I sang off key. Although I didn't remember her, nor the occasion, I flatly denied the allegation.

Unfortunately, there is a sad ending to the story of the beautiful wedding of the young Gunthers. They had two lovely children, but only 15 years after the wedding, Velma tragically died of cancer.

While in Saskatoon, Sarah and Peter came up to visit. The two of them, Henry and Annie and some others of the Wiens family and Henrie and I drove to Dundum, about 30 miles out, to visit my cousin Sarah, the daughter of Uncle Jacob and Aunt Margaret (Wiens). Sarah was now married to Henry Jansen, a former widower, who had a nice farm and had built a beautiful new air conditioned home for his new wife. Cousin Sarah had taught school, been in the Peace Corps, and now, although somewhat late in life, seemed happily married. We had a very enjoyable visit, one that included the usual and delightful Mennonite custom of serving Fesper in the middle of the afternoon.

After several days in Saskatoon, we went to visit my sister Sarah and her family, who lived about half a mile west of the little town of Herschel, a distance of about 100 miles from Saskatoon. Henrie and Annie drove us out, and while we were in the area, they also took us to take a look at the old homestead, the farm my dad had bought back in 1926, and on which I had spent my younger years while growing up. For some reason the scenario now seemed somewhat smaller than I had remembered it. The big red barn now was gray, but whether it had been repainted, or just weathered with time, I don't recall. The mile long lake, on which I had spent many happy hours rafting in the summer, and skating in the winter, was now completely filled in with silt, and was growing hay and pasture. Henry had leased the farm to a tenant when he retired from it in 1969. He did not show us the inside of the house, since I believe that he thought we might have been somewhat embarrassed by the condition it was in under the occupancy of the tenant.

Off to Sarah and Peter's house. They lived in a large white two-story house that had been built about 60 years earlier. It was not in the best of shape either, but it was large and comfortable. It was only about 200 yards away from where the Herschel people had drilled a speculative oil well back in 1928. They didn't hit oil, but they did get a gusher of an artesian well that was still flowing freely with the best soft water in the area.

Sarah was most glad to be the host, and did her utmost to make us feel at home and cook the very best of meals. Visiting her at this time was her youngest daughter Elsie, 21, who had just arrived from Calgary, where she was working as a secretary for Shell Oil. Soon we were also joined by her brother, Walter, his wife, Pauline, and their three children. They had driven all the way from Yerington, Nevada, where they lived. Their lovely three children, Terry, Bernard and Brian, were 11, 8 and 4, respectively. So we had a full house, and Sarah had her hands full. It was good to see my relatives, some of whom I was seeing for the first time.

Next we were off to see my niece, Ruby, Henry and Annie's daughter, who was throwing an outdoor barbecue party. She was married to Bill Sawatsky, whom I last remembered as a young kid. Bill and Ruby lived on a nice farm that I remember was once owned by a neighbor of ours by the name of Lenore White. Bill and Ruby now owned that farm. They now had three beautiful children, two boys, Dwight and Merwin, and one daughter, Lori, the youngest, being seven. At the party we were joined by more relatives I hadn't seen for ages. Soon Ruby's brother, Eddie, arrived, along with his wife Elaine, and their two boys. Also present was my cousin John Klassen and his wife. John is the son of my dad's brother of the same name. Uncle John had passed away back in 1939, as I recall, leaving his wife and two little children in somewhat dire circumstances. However, somehow, they managed to survive, and cousin John was now a big fellow, six foot four.

The barbecue was held in a large machine shed, nicely cleaned up and decorated. There was quite a large assemblage of people, grown-ups and children, and I especially remember the singsong that was held. I was impressed how beautifully these Mennonite people sang in harmony, with Ruby leading the way, and cousin John Klassen singing bass.

At this time the Herschel Mennonites celebrated a special "homecoming day". It was held in a hall on the hill just south of Herschel. There was a lot of singing, there were recitations and skits, and, of course, speeches. There were also some special awards given out. Henrie and I received a special award for "having come to the homecoming from the longest distance away." It was presented by my niece, Ruby. It was a happy occasion, and gave us a chance to meet and see a number of people I hadn't seen for some 25 years.

Among these, was my nephew Peter Klassen, the youngest son of Henry and Annie. Born in 1940, he had studied law at the University of Saskatchewan and had won the Governor-General's Gold Medal as the most outstanding student the year he graduated, no small accomplishment. Now, at 31, he was married, and practicing law in a partnership at Estevan, Saskatchewan. Furthermore, he had just become a father. He had a promising career ahead of him, indeed.

Since I had spent very little time at Herschel since he was born, he admitted that he had no memories of me, but nevertheless, we had more in common than most, since we were the only two Klassens in the whole complex of Klassen families that were college graduates. While the rest of the families were enjoying the afternoon session of the Homecoming test, the two of us spent the afternoon at the Plett's house comparing notes and arguing about world affairs.

At this time I had started writing and laying out my world philosophy about a racial religion for the White Race, and I was enthusiastically primed with my new venture. I especially wanted to discuss it with an intelligent young fellow of Peter's caliber who could understand what I was talking about. Our conversation soon turned to that very subject. Peter, I soon found out, did not share my Weltanschauung. He was brilliant, yes, but he was also a typical product of a liberal intelligentsia education, having been thoroughly steeped in the postwar propaganda of hatred of Hitler and everything that was German. He played it safe, going along with the establishment view, with one objective in mind, how to advance his career and make money. We spent some three or four hours belaboring the subject, with him trying to put me in a position of having to defend Hitler, and me trying to make it clear to him that I had no such obligation, that whereas I regarded Hitler as the greatest leader the White Race had ever produced, nevertheless, our religion was a radical departure from that of the Nazi creed in a number of significant aspects. I explained to him that what I was doing was structuring a completely new and independent racial religion for the survival, expansion and advancement of the White Race, Natures Finest, of which he, too, was a member, I reminded him.

Soon thereafter Henrie and I drove back to Saskatoon with Henry and Annie. Once there, Henry and Annie drove us around to revisit several of the places and institutions that were a sentimental part of my early life. We drove to Rosthern, about 50 miles distant, to take a look at the German English Academy where I was in residence and took the tenth grade some 40 years earlier. The place was still the same, but had also changed considerably. Some buildings had been torn down and several new ones had been built. (Also, they now had indoor plumbing!) Even the name had been changed. It was now called The Rosthern Junior College. I also wanted to visit my old schoolmate, Menno Friesen, who was now a prosperous merchant in his own right. We went to his store, but unfortunately, he was not in town that day. I left my business card. As a result, he visited me in Lighthouse Point, Florida, some eight years later, but that is another story.

The next day we visited the grounds of the University of Saskatchewan, my old Alma Mater. The old Greystone Buildings looked as fresh and beautiful as they ever had. The old red brick Engineering Building looked a little more time worn. I had spent many hours in that Institution, and had a sentimental attachment to it. There were several new buildings on the grounds. It was interesting to reflect that at least two more generations had passed through those hallowed halls since I attended between 1935 and 1942. We also drove up to the Saskatoon Normal School, the training school for Saskatchewan teachers, which I attended in 1936-37. The place was closed. It had been turned over to the military for a training center during World War II, and it had been closed ever since. Time marches on. How sad.

* * * * *

As part of our tour we had planned to see the Canadian Rockies and the Calgary Stampede. At 3:15 on July 14 we boarded Canada Air for Calgary. We arrived there an hour later, at 3:15 Calgary time, and checked into our hotel. We contacted my niece Elsie, and three of us had dinner together. The next day she brought her boy friend, Gordon Platt, over, and we all spent the afternoon at poolside. Gordon was a successful real estate broker in Calgary. The next day the four of us attended the world famous Calgary Stampede. It was a spectacle to behold. The weather was excellent. The next day Henrie and I visited the Calgary Zoo and Prehistoric Park. That same morning I called up an old childhood buddy I had known in Herschel, and invited him to have lunch with me. His name was George Wiens, who was now an accountant with Ernst & Ernst, I believe. He dropped in at our hotel and we walked over to the Petroleum Club, to which he belonged. We had a nice conversation and a good lunch as we recalled some of our highlights over the last forty years. George was married, had three grown sons. He said two of them turned out just fine, one was a problem, and had a drug problem. He said that he was probably the only Mennonite whose kid had spent some time in jail because of drugs. He told me they lived on a small five-acre ranch just outside of Calgary, and that his main avocation was putting on musical concerts, something he had been doing for many years.

The next day Henrie and I attended another session of the Stampede in the afternoon, then that night we had dinner with Elsie in the restaurant atop the Husky Tower, now called the Calgary Tower, I believe.

The following day we took a bus tour to the Rockies, our first stop being beautiful Lake Louise, a real jewel. We stayed at the Chateau Lake Louise, one of those prestigious and stately hotels the Canadian Pacific railway built at strategic places in its railroad network shortly after World War 1. Henrie and I walked on the scenic path around the lake, then rented a canoe and slowly paddled around the tranquil surface enjoying the snow-clad mountain scenery and their reflections in the lake.

From there we took a bus tour to the nearby Wapta Icefield, changing into a huge van with caterpillar tracks that actually drove us over the surface of the glacier itself. We next took the bus over the Kicking Horse Pass, into British Columbia and into the Yoho Park. Somewhere along here we stopped on the continental divide at a place where the waters divided and began their long journey flowing into not two, but three different oceans, namely the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic Ocean.

After we returned to our hotel at Lake Louise we left the following day and backtracked to Banff, checking in at another one of those grand old Canadian Pacific hotels, called the Banff Springs Hotel. After spending a few days there, we drove back to Calgary and to the airport. At 3:30 on July 24, we caught a Canada Air plane to Toronto, arriving there at 9:50 P.M. We stayed overnight in a small convenience room with bath in the basement of the airport, then at 10 A.M. we caught a flight to Miami, arriving there in bright sunshine and heat at 12:45 P.M., a drastic change from the cool Canadian Rockies of the day before.

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Milestone Fifty: Saskatchewan Homecoming

The Summer of 1971

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Milestone Fifty-One: Writing and Publishing the First Book

1971-1973

After arriving back home from the Canadian trip on July 24, I had my hands full in several categories. The land business was at its busiest and needed my attention. There were a number of prospects to see, contracts to close, land payments to make. There was that book I had started to write, and any number of ideas floating around in my head that had to be organized and formalized, then set down on paper. And then there was Eleanor Kramer and her group in the Tampa Bay area that I had left in limbo before departing for Canada.

When I got back, I had my answer to the latter situation. In a letter dated June 28 (but evidently mailed later, since I didn't receive it before I left on July 4) Eleanor let me know she was devastated about my position on Christianity. The White man's culture and Christianity have for the past two thousand years been "inextricably intertwined", she pointed out, and "the 'religion' to which you refer sounds to me a bit like Aryan Judaism", she said. Furthermore, although she had (at that time) not yet relayed that information on to the rest of her flock, she was sure that they too would not go along with my heretic views on Christianity.

I was neither surprised nor dismayed. In fact, I had expected as much, and her reaction convinced me more than ever that Christianity was indeed the disruptive intruder that had created havoc and confusion in the ranks of the White Race ever since that Jewish snake had raised its ugly head. I was more inspired than ever to get on with writing my book. In a letter to her, dated August 5, I laid out my position to her in emphatic detail. Regarding Christianity being "inextricably intertwined" with the White Race, I countered that statement with: so had tuberculosis, hepatitis and polio, but were they a blessing or a plague? This four and a half page letter, too, is recorded in Klassen Letters, Vol. 1, and can be reviewed in full. It was the forerunner of several more letters to follow in the ensuing exchange with other members of the group, some of which are also recorded in the same Vol. 1. Of special note is the 11-page letter I wrote on this subject to John R. Adams, Ph.D., on January 10, 1972.

In formulating the manuscript, I decided to divide it into two parts, the first part in general spelling out the problem, and the second part coming up with what I considered the solution, namely, a dynamic racial religion for the White Race. When Eleanor said that what I proposed sounded to her like "Aryan Judaism", she was not completely off base. I felt that what the White Race sorely needed was indeed a counterpart to the Jewish racial religion that had been such a powerful factor in propelling the Jews to gain mastery of the world. I reasoned that if a miserable racial religion such as Judaism could do that much for a despicable bunch of parasites such as the Jews, imagine what a powerful, well-structured racial religion could do for an intelligent and creative people such as ours. There was, however, this major difference, all to our advantage: whereas the Jewish race and religion was parasitic by nature, the White Race and its religion were the very opposite. Whereas the Jews needed a productive host on which to feed, we were independently creative and productive and did not need anyone for our sustenance and welfare. In fact, the sooner we could get rid of all the freeloaders and parasites on our back, the better.

I decided to call the first part Book 1: The Unavenged Outrage, and the second part, Book II: The Salvation. I also finally decided on the title. By calling it Nature's Eternal Religion, I felt that each one of those three words emphasized the meaning I wished to convey, namely that our religion was based on the laws and wisdom of Nature, that such had been with us from time eternal and would remain as such, and that Nature's rules were the unchanging creed which governed the actions of all living creatures, including mankind.

Having written a volume of material, by the summer of 1972, I started looking around for a printer. I realized that because of the controversial nature of the material, and since most book printers were in the hands of the Jews, such printer would not be easy to find. A young friend of mine by the name of Tony Lukas suggested that he had a good prospect. He was working for a book printer in Hialeah, called Universal Printing Company. It was a family owned company, a family by the name of Bechtel, and they were Christians. Of course, that too could cause a problem, but he didn't think so. He had already talked to the old man who headed the company, and he seemed favorable. Why not go talk to him. They were located at 480 West 20th St., Hialeah.

I called up Mr. Bechtel and made an appointment. I brought with me half of the manuscript, which consisted of two full loose-leaf binders. I had also brought my checkbook, and we got down to business. I informed him up front that, yes, the material was controversial, and we took a dim view of Christianity, but then after all, a printer I presumed was a printer, and not a censor. He assured me my presumption was correct, and that as long as my book was not pornographic nor communistic, he would print it all right. I assured him it was neither pornographic nor communistic, and we soon agreed on a price. He drew up a letter that served as a contract, and I gave him an initial check in the amount of $2500 that would bind the deal. I felt fortunate. It hadn't been so tough to get a printer after all.

About two weeks later, on October the 10th, to be exact, I received a telephone call from Ron Bechtel, one of the sons in the business, telling me that he was coming to my office to see me. He didn't say what about, but I had a premonition. When he came in, he brought with him my manuscript, the contract and the uncashed check. He told me in sanctimonious and holier than thou tones that after reading the manuscript his company could not and would not print my book. They were born-again Christians and what I said in my book was contrary to everything they stood for. Not only was the deal off, but he started lecturing me about if Christ couldn't enter my heart it was because I wouldn't let him in. But, I argued, the old man had said - no matter. The deal was off. So much for broad-minded Christian tolerance.

Next, I started looking for a new printer. In this regard, Tony Lukas, and also another friend of mine, Pete Martin, were of crucial help. They suggested I might go see a company in Ft. Lauderdale, that, although they were not in the book printing business, they did print an advertising flyer by the name of The Tribune. They could probably also print books. They were located at 4009 N.E. 5th Terrace. On Friday, October the 13th, (my lucky day!) I met with Mike Powell, the vice-president and the son of the owner of the company. I gave him the same caveat emptors, warnings and disclaimers as I had given the Bechtels, but Mike said he didn't think it would cause any problems. We soon came to an agreement on price, a sum that was actually a little lower than had been quoted by Universal. Mike said he would talk with his dad, John Powell, for confirming the deal. This he did, and on October 17, I came back to his office, and again, as with the Bechtels, I gave him an initial deposit of $2500 and completed the deal. He sent me a letter confirming the terms of the deal the next day. This time the deal stuck and we were in business. The deal pretty well included the whole package. They would do the typesetting, paste up the pages, do the cover in two colors, the bookbinding and the packaging in cartons of 32. I would bring in the copy in installments, pick up the typesetting a few days later, proofread it and bring back the corrected copy, including a segment of new material. At this time I had not completed my total manuscript, and I kept writing new chapters as the spirit moved me. My wife would do some of the typing for me, with the help of my secretary, Mary Childress, at the office, as well as Mary Wimmer and Donna Thayer, two friends who could also type. All this I was doing while trying to keep on top of my real estate business and the bookstore as well.

Finally, the printing job was completed. They delivered the first 1792 books on February 22, 1973, to Austin Davis' warehouse at 681 N.E. 42 Street, Pompano Beach. By March 6, The Tribune had delivered all the books, a total of 19,277, to the warehouse. It was the first book I had ever written and the first book The Tribune had ever printed. Although less than perfect, I was well satisfied with the job. Our total cost of the printing was $14,141.61, a price I wish I could duplicate today. It had all come out of my own pocket. It was a severe strain on my financial resources, for although business was good, I repeatedly had a number of heavy mortgage payments to make on the several land purchases, and the cash flow was a matter of nip and tuck. In fact, I had to repeatedly go to the bank and make personal loans to tide me over from one payment to the next.

By this time I had decided on a name for our religion and for our church. Since the White Race was the most creative and productive creature Nature had produced in its long process of evolution, I would call our religion Creativity, and the organization The Church of the Creator. I felt we Creators well deserved the accolade. In order that the Church would be separated from the fortunes or misfortunes of my own private affairs and would have continuity and stand on its own feet, I applied for incorporation papers. On August 16, 1973, we received our Corporate Charter as a non-profit, religious organization from the State of Florida. We were now off and running. We now had our creed, we had our book, our own "holy scriptures", and we were recognized as a religious institution. So far so good. But I realized that there was still a long and precarious battle ahead, to be sure. Not only a battle, but a relentless, unending war against the powerful and evil forces that sought to mongrelize and destroy our precious White Race, a war that would finally end in total victory for one side or the other. But now, at least, the White Race had a meaningful battle plan and a powerful weapon with which to win that war. It had a fully structured racial religion of its own.

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Milestone Fifty-One: Writing and Publishing the First Book

1971-1973

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Milestone Fifty-Two: Our 25th Wedding Anniversary
November 22,1971

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At this time Henrie and I were still interested in exploring the Caribbean Islands and tropical areas offshore to our east and south. We had visited many of these islands but had never been to Puerto Rico. Our young friend from our recent 1967 trip through Europe, namely Verena Ostertag from Germany, had resettled in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She invited us to visit there, and in fact offered we could stay at her apartment. She was now a professional architect and was specializing in the remodeling and renovating of older hotels for such chains as Holiday Inns, and others. To celebrate our 25th anniversary Henrie and I decided we would take a short tour through the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

We took in three islands, first of all flying to Charlotte Amelie, the capital of St. Thomas. We checked in at the Hilton Hotel, which was perched on the side of the mountain, with a spectacular view of the beautiful St. Thomas Harbor below.

It was here that we celebrated our 25th anniversary. Henrie had bought a colorful, long evening gown for the occasion, and I had brought along my tuxedo, a holdover from the Governor's Ball in Tallahassee in 1967. We had an excellent dinner of lobster and crab at the hotel dining room, then spent the evening dancing in the nightclub in the same hotel. Practically all the customers there were White American tourists. It was a happy occasion.

Later, I had occasion to reminisce about my parents 25th anniversary forty years earlier, and how different things were then from now. I remember that occasion quite vividly. It was in January of 1931. I was then in the ninth grade and not yet quite 13. We were then in the middle of a long and severe depression. We had an exceedingly mild winter that year, and there was no snow on the ground, a rarity for Saskatchewan at that time of the year. I had just bought myself a second hand bike and was learning to ride it. My parents anniversary was celebrated at our farmhouse, with a preacher officiating and giving a sermon, reviewing the previous 25 years of our parents' life. My dad had a tear in his eye. Present were all five of us children, with my brother Henry, at 24, being the oldest. None of my siblings were married at that time. Also present were many of our relatives at Herschel, and also many of our neighbors and friends. As is the usual Mennonite custom, a big Fesper was served in the middle of the afternoon.

But to get back to the November of 1971. The day after our celebration we spent exploring the small island, what there was of it. One of the attractions was Bluebeard's Castle, and there were a few native restaurants, in one of which we had lunch. But by and large, the most conspicuous aspect that I observed was that the city was crowded with niggers, mongrels and Asiatics, that most buildings were old and run down, and basically looked like a slum similar to most of the black sections in cities back in the United States.

From St. Thomas we took a local flight to the formerly Danish island of St. Croix, the largest of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its two main cities are Christiansted and Frederiksted. After viewing the depressive state of affairs and the degenerate population in St. Thomas, I had expected that the Danes, who had developed this island some two hundred years earlier, were still in charge of St. Croix, and that the situation there was in much better shape.

However, much to my disappointment, there was not a single Dane in sight, but only more niggers and degenerates. Whereas some of the old buildings still had some vestiges of Danish architecture, but nevertheless, like in St. Thomas, everything was now shabby and run down. I thought to myself, such beautiful islands, such balmy temperate climate, such magnificent beaches and natural landscape, but what a shame to have degenerated into the hands of such dissolute and primitive peoples. They had reduced everything the White Man had built into nothing more than a stinking slum. This real estate was far too valuable to leave in the hands of such degenerates, I thought.

We flew back to Charlotte Amalie, then on to San Juan, Puerto Rico. We took a taxi to the address Verena had given us, but she had been called away to some convention. She had left a note for us, however, to obtain the key to her apartment from one of her neighbors. We stayed there for two nights, meanwhile exploring the island. We took a tour of the Island, visited Morro Castle, and several other tourist attractions. I found that the population of Puerto Rico was overwhelmingly Hispanic with a heavy strain of black in its racial mixture, and although several cuts above that of the Virgin Islanders, it too was extremely depressive. Everything was in Spanish, street signs, storefronts, and what have you. It did not seem at all like this was any part of American territory. Why we should subsidize and support all these freeloaders, or even want these revolutionaries to be part of our country, was a mystery to me.

At that time I was deep into writing my new book, and I carried with me a compact little tape recorder to set down any ideas that might be useful in compiling the book. On the flight back to Miami, I dictated and recorded some of the impressions and ideas that resulted in Chapter 5 of NER, entitled The Black Plague in our Midst. I felt that I had seen more than enough of the plague first hand.

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Milestone Fifty-Two: Our 25th Wedding Anniversary
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Milestone Fifty-Three: Our Daughter Gets Married

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In 1969 Kim had finished her four years of high school at Pine Crest in Ft. Lauderdale, and she and Henrie started scouting around for a suitable college for her to attend. After visiting approximately four prospective schools, we finally settled on Colorado State, at Ft. Collins, Colorado.

Henrie had been brought up in the High Country of Colorado, and her love of the mountains stayed with her for the rest of her days. Some of this affection for Colorado was evidently conveyed on to her daughter, since I believe the choice favoring Ft. Collins was partially influenced by the fact that it was located on the eastern slope of the Rockies in Colorado. It was also at this time, in the fall of 1969, when we took Kim to Colorado State, that Henrie and I first visited Ouray, Colorado, a small town in a most beautiful setting in the San Juan Mountains that fully justified calling itself 'The Switzerland of America." A few years later we were to buy a 160-acre ranch north of Ouray.

During her first year at Colorado State Kim was on a bowling team. Also on a rival bowling team was a lanky young fellow from Wilmington, Delaware. He was also attending Colorado State. His name was Walter Scott Moore. Kim walked up to him, shook his hand and said, "My name is Kim Klassen." Less than three years later they were married.

The wedding took place at Estes Park, Colorado, about 40 miles south and west of Ft. Collins. The date was June 5, 1972, just two days before Kim's twenty-first birthday.

They were married at 11 A.M. in St. Bartholomew's Chapel on Devil's Gulch Road. Father King, an Episcopalian priest, officiated.

Kim's Maid of Honor was Janet Wiedmann, the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mert Wiedmann from Shatter, California, who were also at the wedding. Although not the official photographer, Mert took quite a number of pictures on his own account, a hobby at which he was quite an expert. Besides Janet, the bridesmaids were June Hanning, Betty Lee Love, Jan Briscoe, Peggy Firth and Bea Moore, the latter being Walt's sister. As father of the bride, I had the honor of leading Kim down the aisle and giving the bride away.

The Best Man, who stood up for Walt, was J. D. Moore, his father. The groom's attendants were his brother James, his stepbrother Tim Brannaman, Scott Dumler,

Rick Huddleston, Bruce Douglas, and Ken Slump. Some of the other wedding guests were: Walt's grandparents, Scott and Lucile Moore; his aunt, Ann Stern; Kim's grandmother, Mrs. Eleanor McWilliams; Henrie's aunt, Lenora Dean; Mrs. Stringharn from Shatter, who was Mrs. Pat Wiedmann's mother; Colleen Kelly, a niece of Gene

Kelly, the movie actor, and, of course, the mothers of the bride and the groom, Henrie and Ruth, respectively. After a considerable number of pictures were taken by photographer John dark, we held a reception at the Black Canyon Inn, a little ways down the same street from the church. Incidentally, it was while we were having our reception dinner at the motel dining room, that I got a surprise long distance call from Australia. It came from the owner of the 160-acre ranch north of Ouray, who was now living on a sheep "station" in the outback of Australia. He was calling to confirm acceptance of my offer for the purchase of his 160 acres in Colorado, much to my satisfaction.

Later that afternoon Kim and Walt took off on their honeymoon. Walt had just previously bought himself a brand new Monte Carlo Chevrolet. First they drove back to the Moore's home at Wilmington, Delaware. From there they took a flight to the island of St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, where the Moores had a vacation home, and there they stayed for a week or so.

When they returned from their honeymoon Kim and Walt both took jobs with the DuPont plastics and textiles plant at Seaford, Delaware, jobs that had been pre-arranged some time earlier. In March of 1973, Walt left DuPont and joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed at Mather Air Force Base near Sacramento, California. Here they lived for a period of six months. In September of 1973, Walt joined me as a partner in my ongoing real estate business. In 1978, Walt decided that the real estate business was not his first choice and that he wanted to become a chiropractor. By this time the young Moore family already had two sons, namely Scott and Bryan. The family moved to Davenport, Iowa, where Walt pursued three years of intensive study in his chosen profession with the Palmer School of Chiropractic and graduated near the top of his class.

Now, some ten years later, Dr. Walter S. Moore is well established in his own clinic in Martinsville, Virginia. The family has now grown to three, with the addition of Amy

Lynn, and they are all doing very well. Henrie and I are very proud of our daughter, of our son-in-law, and of our grandchildren. We feel very fortunate to have such a fine family into the next generation, and who could ask for more than that?

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Milestone Fifty-Four: Exploring Ancient History Around the Aegean Sea
1973

During the summer of 1973 Henrie and I decided it was time to take another trip across the ocean and explore some of the historic vistas of ancient history. We were especially interested in Greece and Turkey and some of the islands of the Aegean Sea. After all, my book was finished, business was good, and I had worked hard and I owed it to myself to take some time off again.

We decided on a three-week Maupintaur tour, one of the better ones, and on September 22 we took off. Our first arrival was in the ancient and historic city of Athens, Greece, where we checked in at the plush Athens Hilton Hotel. As soon as we had cleaned up, it was off to the dining room for a sampling of typical Greek food. I don't remember too many dinners, but I do remember the good food and jolly atmosphere of that first dinner after arrival. It was served with Greek wines, Souviakia, a lamb dish and baklava for desert. I enjoyed it all immensely, and it was a good introduction to the land of the Hellenes.

We soon met our tour guide. His name was Victor Stubbs, and he was from England. He was tall, six foot four, blonde. In his early thirties, and a very pleasant and good-looking fellow. The first morning after our arrival he took us on a city tour, and one of our first stops was at the National Archaeological Museum, where we were to be treated to a lecture on the history of Greek sculpture and its early development by a native guide. The guide was more than an hour late in arriving, much to the aggravation of Victor Stubbs. Evidently, he had been held up by the police on some traffic charge and hauled into court. Finally he did arrive and we heard an interesting lecture with ample exhibits of the many phases during the development of Greek sculpture. One of the interesting facts that I learned from this lecture was that when the early Christians arrived on the scene they made it a special campaign to go about and destroy as many of the beautiful sculptures of classical time as they could. This, the idiots argued, was to prevent "Idol worship." Those that they did not destroy in totality they would at least disfigure the faces of these statues by smashing the noses, the most characteristic part of the face. What a waste!

My impression of the city itself was not as favorable as had been that of the dinner the night before. The city seemed so bare and treeless, so hot and crowded, so much stone and statue, but it did have a most interesting history, and that is what we had come out to see. Nor was I very impressed with the native population. Considering the high levels of physical beauty and mental development of their ancient ancestors at the time of Pericles and Socrates, of Plato and Aristotle, the present Greek specimens were a major let down. Certainly they were in sharp contrast to our fair-haired English guide. It seemed to me that there had been so much mongrelization and down-breeding over the last two thousand years in this cradle of civilization that the native population was now such as to be on the very fringes of what we would like to think of as the White Race.

Be that as it may, the accumulation of history at this major fountain of civilization was overwhelming. Our tour included a visit to the Acropolis and its centerpiece, the Parthenon. At night we again viewed these ancient landmarks of history from a stadium seating arrangement, in a program called "The Sound and Light Show." As the lights played on the Acropolis and the Parthenon, the loudspeakers dramatically narrated the ancient history of this legendary and most famous shrine. It told of warriors and conquerors, of marching armies and the clash of arms. What with the skillful arrangement of accompanying music and sound effects, it was most impressive.

We took several side trips outside the city. One that was most memorable was a trip to the ruins of the Temple of Poseidon at sunset. Located at Cape Sounlon, the temple sat on a hill overlooking the Aegean Sea, and as the sun sank below the horizon, it cast a shimmering glow of gold over the azure waters.

One other memorable side trip was to the ancient and historic city of Delphi. During the long bus trip we had some problems between the smokers and the non-smokers. It seemed like half the people in our group had caught colds (including Henrie) and our guide requested that there be no smoking in deference to the confined conditions under which we were traveling. This especially strained the patience of two ladies from Dallas, who were chain smokers and happened to sit in the seat behind us. Some argument ensued.

In traveling along the narrow and winding road to Delphi, I was amazed at the bleakness of the passing landscape. It was hilly, barren and rocky, with a few patches of brown grass interspersed. Every once in a while we would see a small herd of goats grazing on the scanty provender, attended by a ragged herdsman. Also in evidence every so often were crude huts, where the herdsman evidently lived.

Arriving at Delphi, we checked in at the Vouzas Hotel. The city has a long and complex history, at various times wielding a most powerful influence in the religious affairs of the Ancient Greeks and even beyond in a way that compares to that of the present day Vatican in Rome. At the heart of it was The Oracle of Delphi, whose advice was heeded by many of the most powerful rulers of the times, both inside and outside of Greece.

Apparently, it all started in prehistoric times with the discovery of a fissure in some rocks at this place from which issued a mysterious gas, which when inhaled, caused hallucinations. The priests in charge of the then prevalent religion were quick to take advantage of this phenomenon, and gathering some virgin maidens, they had them sniff this peculiar issue from out of the fissure in the rocks. While in this state of intoxication, the maidens would utter some incoherent mumblings which only the priests would claim to understand, and the priests would also take it upon themselves to interpret these "Oracles" to the gullible and superstitious. Soon this became a shrine and temples were built around the place. Powerful potentates came from far and wide to have this supernatural "Oracle" from out of the bowels of the earth make far reaching decisions for them. As time went on, this would become a well established and highly revered tradition that lasted for thousands of years. It is fairly obvious that the priests could interpret these mumblings any way they wanted to and had a good thing going. Although the fissure has now run out of gas, the City of Delphi and its hallowed history remains. However, in a way, some things haven't changed too much since then. People are still as gullible and superstitious today as they were in those ancient and bygone times.

Still in very good condition was The Stadium, where the Pythian games were held every four years, an event that was similar to the Olympiads, but preceded it by several centuries. The Stadium was built of stone, with a seating capacity of seven thousand. How these ancient stonecutters, with the primitive tools they had, could cut such a volume of stone and do it so artistically, is a mystery to me unto this day.

When we returned to Athens, we went straight to the port of Piraeus and boarded our cruise ship that was to take us to the various islands of the Aegean. However, that afternoon a strong storm blew up, known in the Mediterranean area as Mistrals, and the harbor master ordered all ships to stay in port while the storm lasted. There were a number of large cruise ships in the harbor at that time, just chafing at the bit to get going on their proscribed schedules. At twelve midnight the order was lifted. Henrie and I were wandering around on the deck at that time of night, and we could hardly believe our eyes and ears as to what happened next. Several whistles started blaring and our ship raced out full steam ahead for the narrow entrance (or exit) of the harbor that could accommodate only one cruise ship at a time. Another big cruise ship had the same idea and was racing to get out of the harbor ahead of us. Officers with bullhorns on both decks were screaming and cursing back and forth at each other's ships to get out of the way and for a short while it looked like they were playing a game of "chicken", not unlike teenagers have been known to do with cars. I thought surely there was going to be a mighty crash and collision, but at the last split second the other ship threw its engines in reverse and saved the day, while ours steamed on, full speed ahead.

The storm had not fully subsided and the seas were still rough. Our stalwart guide, Vie Stubbs, who was no sailor, stayed in his cabin for the next two days. One of the two smoking ladies from Dallas took out a couple of bottles of whiskey and stayed dead drunk for the next several days and felt no pain. However, after a day or so the weather returned to calm, and we visited three very interesting islands of the Aegean, missing one on our schedule due to the delay. Of particular interest was the island of Santorini and the ancient 3500-year-old Minoan village that was once covered by volcanic eruption and was now being excavated. It is near the present village of Akrotiri.

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From Athens we flew to the ancient and historic city of Istanbul, Turkey, a city that straddles two continents. For more than 1200 years it was known as the city of Constantinople, founded by the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century C.E. It soon rivaled, then surpassed Rome as the center of the White Man's civilization and as the dominant headquarters of the Catholic Church. In the ongoing struggle between the Turkish Moslems and the White Christians it was finally and decisively conquered by the Osmanli Turks under the leadership of 21-year-old Sultan Mohammed II in 1453. It was undoubtedly the most disastrous setback the White Race had suffered up to that time.

Our group checked in at the Istanbul Hilton, its finest hotel at that time. I found Istanbul a most fascinating city, a contrast in modern structures such as the Hilton, the modern suspension bridge just recently built across the Bosporus by White engineers, and the ancient mosques and minarets. We visited the Hagia Sophia, built by Roman Emperor Justinian in the sixth century. After the Turkish conquest, it was converted into a mosque, and is now a museum. For 1200 years it stood as the city's greatest architectural edifice, being surpassed only by the Blue Mosque, built by the Turks in the 18th century. The latter is still very much a mosque, and we watched as hundreds of Moslems would kneel in prayer in their bare or stocking feet. The city's skyline is silhouetted by over 400 mosques. We also visited the Covered Bazaar, which took in an area of some 40 acres and consisted of hundreds of shops of immense variety. It was a place one could easily get lost if they strayed from the group. One of the highlights was our visit to Topkapi, the palace of the grand Ottoman Sultans. There we saw the Sultan's jewels and the famous gem encrusted dagger. Also of major interest were its extensive gardens, pavilions, reception halls and private quarters. A leisurely cruise along the Bosporus to the Sea of Marmara and back concluded our visit.

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On leaving the hotel, we all embarked in small groups, taking a taxi to the Istanbul airport. It so happened that our driver was one of the wildest and fastest we have ever encountered. He virtually flew us to the airport, during which process we waved to several others in our group as we flew by them. From Istanbul our flight took us to Budapest, Hungary, but not without a short stopover in Bucharest, Romania. Here I noticed a number of large anti-aircraft guns stationed around the perimeter of the airport, their immense barrels pointed skyward at a 45-degree angle.

Arriving at our destination, we checked in at the Budapest Hilton. On taking a city tour we, for the first time, saw at first hand what life was like in a communist country, and the overall picture was bleak and drab. However, we soon discovered from a number of lectures by our city guides that Hungary and Budapest, too, had a long and checkered history that was very interesting. We also discovered that the city actually consisted of two parts, divided by the historic Danube River, with Buda on the west side and Pest on the east.

Of particular interest were the beautiful Parliament buildings, the former Royal Palace, the Square of the Heroes, (this had a long story attached to it, but I forget the details) the great Coronation Church, and the Opera House. We had a memorable dinner out at a nightclub that specialized in native Hungarian dishes, and also entertained us with a gypsy floorshow. Very good. One other night we went to a concert that specialized in Hungarian folk dances, music and vocals.

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From Budapest we took a flight to Zagreb, Yugoslavia, then a bus tour through the Yugoslavian countryside to the colorful and historic seaside resort of Dubrovnik on the shores of the Adriatic. Driving over the landscape, I was amazed at how rugged, rocky and desolate this part of the country was.

Arriving at Dubrovnik, we checked in at the President Hotel, a real beautiful, modern edition that was also referred to as the typewriter hotel because of its terraced shape that resembled the keyboard of a typewriter. It was located on the side of an escarpment with the upper part being level with the city, and the lower part with the beach. Dubrovnik, too, has a long and colorful history. It was once also known as Ragusa, and it was the capital of a Roman province. In the seventh century it was destroyed by the Avars, and the survivors went to the present site, rebuilt and heavily fortified the city. It became a republic, and remained under the protection of the Byzantine emperors until 1204 CE, when it was dominated by the Venetians for 150 years. Subsequently Hungarians, Turks, Austrians and French have dominated or protected the little seaport, which was Austrian from 1814 to 1918, and has been Yugoslavian ever since. There are still many landmarks of its colorful past.

We visited many of these. Of special interest were the Rector's Palace, the Pile Gate, Onofrio's Fountain, St. Lawrence Fortress, the Dominican Cloisters and the Franciscan Monastery, which houses Europe's oldest pharmacy.

On one of our off days, Henrie and I took a small boat over to the Island of Lacroma, about half a mile or so offshore from Dubrovnik. It is here that Archduke Maximilian and his wife Carlotta had their summer home before they embarked on their ill-fated venture to become Emperor and Empress of Mexico. The Archduke was the brother of the then Emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph. Their summer home, which resembled a castle, was now dilapidated and very much in the need of repair. We wandered through it, and walked on some planks that if not careful, you could drop down into a basement about 30 feet below. There was a restaurant adjoining, where we had lunch. The grounds around were well kept. The story of this romantic and historic couple can be further followed in a published book I have read entitled "Maximilian and Carlotta" by Gene Smith. The 1939 movie "Juarez" also portrays their dramatic and poignant story. It stars Brian Aherne as Emperor Maximilian, and Bette Davis as Carlotta.

Of all the tour guides I have encountered, I would say that Victor Stubbs was one of the finest and I had a special rapport with him. Often, as we would enter the bus and he was counting noses, I would whisper to him 'Think White." I had already made him aware that I had written a book about the racial crisis that was closing in on us, and although he was no racist, he frankly admitted that his native country, Britain, was headed for rapid decline and disaster. In fact, he was thinking of becoming a citizen of Monaco, or Switzerland, or some other country. On one of our free days in Dubrovnik, I was having lunch with him in the coffee shop of the President Hotel, and we really got into the ideological discussion of race and religion for the next three hours. I was pointing out to him that the adventurous Britons, who not too long ago had boasted that "Brittania Rules the Waves, Britons never shall be slaves", and that the sun never set on the great British Empire, were now indeed slaves in their own land under the tyranny of the Jewish Occupation Government (JOG). I reminded him that whereas they once had a great empire, their country was now rapidly becoming a miserable slum, and that the Pakistanis, the Hindus, the niggers and the mud races, under the auspices of the Jews, were rapidly taking over. I charged that the once heroic empire builders had become a nation of wimps, and instead of emigrating, why didn't he and others stand their ground, fight, and take back their own country? Then I launched into the Christianity issue, and told him that we considered it as nothing more than a treacherous Jewish scam designed to soften up the White Race so that we could be more easily exploited, robbed and destroyed by those international parasites, the Jews.

Naturally, all this came as a great shock to Victor. What you are saying, he exclaimed. Is that we are crazy to let them do this to us! Is that right? I looked him in the eye, and replied something to the effect that, yes, I think you are getting the general idea. I will send you a copy of my book, and you can get the rest of the story. He said, fine, I believe my brother, who is more racially aware, would be much interested. But nevertheless, he was much perturbed about what I had told him. When I returned back to Florida, I did indeed send him Nature's Eternal Religion, but I never heard from him again.

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Milestone Fifty-Four: Exploring Ancient History Around the Aegean Sea

1973

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Milestone Fifty-Five: Venture into North Carolina

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Ever since we moved to Florida in 1958, we were interested in the cooler mountains of North Carolina as a summer alternative to the flatlands and the hot and humid summers of South Florida. In the summer of 1959, when Kim was eight, we made our first trip to Franklin, N.C. to dig in the mud for rubies and other elusive gems. (Franklin advertised itself as "The Gem Capital of the World.") On that same trip we also explored the Fontana Dam recreational area, which had a number of cabins for rent, and also had facilities for boating, archery, horseback riding, folk dancing, craft making and other fun and games. We returned to the same and some of the surrounding areas many summers since then, taking in The Smoky Mountains National Park, Asheville, Bryson City, and including Gatlinburg and Pidgeon Forge, Tennessee.

By about 1968 I began thinking about buying some properties in the Blue Ridge Mountains area around Franklin. I did, in fact, conclude a deal on a 2-1/2 acre tract fronting on Cartoogechaye Creek, made the required down payment, signed a legal contract for delivery of the deed. When after several months no deed was forthcoming, I checked with the real estate agent as to what was the problem. It turned out that the owner, who was a crooked lawyer, shortly after signing my contract, had received another offer (through the same real estate agent) for a thousand dollars more. Between the two of them they connived to ignore my prior contract and had sold and deeded the tract to the second party and generously offered to refund my down payment. I refused the offer and insisted they live up to the contract and deliver. I tried to sue for performance, but evidently the lawyers had a closed fraternity and no lawyer in Franklin would take my case. I found another lawyer in an adjoining county who did take the case, or at least pretended he did. However, after taking my retainer fee, and after giving me a lot of double talk, he did nothing. So much for my first attempt to buy real estate in North Carolina. I finally settled for the refund.

Next, I was about to purchase a 21-acre tract within the city limits of Bryson City. However, after some protracted haggling, that deal fell through.

Finally, in 1971, we found a beautiful 54-acre tract about nine miles north of Franklin. It was located on a rushing trout stream called Burningtown Creek, with about 2000 feet of stream frontage. It had meadowland in a valley, and it also had mountain terrain and trees. It seemed a most likely location for a future retirement home. On May 7, 1971, I concluded its purchase from two Florida couples, Mr. & Mrs. Wm. F. Supple, and Mr. & Mrs. Roger F. Amundsen.

But then, that same year, I got the urge to acquire a going "ranch", something larger, with buildings already in place. Soon, the same broker that had sold us the Burningtown acreage, found a likely prospect for us south of Franklin, just north of the Georgia border. It consisted of about 160 acres, had a fairly modern house on it, a barn and other outbuildings. It belonged to Richard S. Jones, a leading attorney in town, in partnership with his parents. After looking it over in considerable detail, it seemed like just the proper ticket and I decided to buy. When I told Austin Davis about my purchase, he expressed an eager desire to have a partial interest in the property, and soon we came to an agreement. One of my companies, Pines'n Palms Ranches, would have a 60% interest and Austin the remaining 40%. That purchase was concluded on January 15, 1972.

Soon, a neighbor, J. J. Ayers, who had an excellent 25-acre property facing both Hwy. 441 and Old 441, made us an offer to exchange his pie-shaped piece for 15 acres and our house. His property had an old shack on it, a barn and some buildings, but its main attraction was the 2500 feet of frontage on the major highway, all of which had commercial potential. We decided to make the trade.

For nearly two years we did nothing with the property. (I was too busy with my subdivisions in Florida, plus writing my new book, Nature's Eternal Religion.) Then, in the latter part of 1973 we decided to put in a system of roads and subdivide the westerly 100 acres that lay in the mountainous section of the property.

In May of 1973 we first contacted Dean Conner, who owned the Franklin Grading Company in Franklin. His company was equipped with bulldozers, graders and other heavy equipment for earth moving work. After having a survey company headed by J. Frank Shope survey and draw a map of the boundaries of our property, we had Dean Conners and his crew start cutting in a road from Old Hwy. 441 on our eastern boundary westward about one third of a mile, then branching out into two roads, the upper and the lower, into the mountainous section, to the western boundaries of our property. This they did, starting in August of 1973.

After the roads were in we had Frank Shope and his crew come back and stake out individual lots facing the roads.

We laid out two small subdivisions. One, called Swiss Village, consisted of 32 lots, and the other called Bavarian Village, consisted of 17 lots, for a total of 49 lots. J. Frank Shope completed the survey work, staking out each lot, and drawing the subdivision maps on May 9, 1974. The maps were then duly recorded in the Macon County Recorder's Office in the County Courthouse.

Up to 1973 the demand for North Carolina properties and building lots had been quite brisk. Then, when the Arab oil boycott hit the news. It frightened the traveling public, and sales stopped as suddenly as if a water tap had been turned off. Our timing happened to be most unfortunate. A few hundred feet south of the juncture where the roads branched there was a particular site that attracted my attention. It looked like in times past it might have been the site of some old timer's cabin, but now long gone. It had seven huge oak trees spaced in a way that they would surround the cabin, at the same time offered a lovely open view to the valley and the mountains to the east. What a lovely place to build a cabin, I thought.

No sooner did the idea occur but what Austin and I started working on it. But what by now we were short of was the cash to build such a cabin. We needed about $20,000 in order to do the job. We contacted different banks, both in North Carolina and in Florida. Finally, we found a bank in Clyde, N.C., that had enough confidence in us to lend us the whole amount, based on a five-year amortization.

Next, we found a building contractor in the environs of Franklin by the name of Harold Kimsey. What I had in mind a two-story Swiss Chalet type of cabin, with a deck on both the ground floor and the second floor. Furthermore, I wanted a basement and a fireplace. All this I incorporated in a sketch, and on March 25, 1974, I sent two copies of the drawings to Harold Kimsey. On the basis of the sketch, we drew up a contract for its construction. No architect was consulted, no blueprints were drawn. The total cost was slightly over $17,500. Soon thereafter Dean Conners and his earthmoving outfit started excavating for the basement and moving dirt.

In April Harold Kimsey started on the construction. Austin and I made a number of trips to the site during the summer to see that everything was going all right. Everything went well and by October the cabin was finished. It was a most delightful Swiss Chalet type of mountain cabin. It comprised of two stories plus a basement, had three bedrooms, one and a half baths, two decks, a real fireplace, a shake shingle roof, and above all, a most gorgeous view overlooking the valley and the mountains to the east.

Soon we had the cabin furnished. Kim and Walt, Henrie and I spent our 1974 Christmas holidays in the cabin, much to our delight. Austin and his girl friend, Norma, would spend some time vacationing in it, as did Kim and Walt and some of their friends. Everything was going along fine.

In 1975 we decided to incorporate the North Carolina property, that is, the two subdivisions and the rest of the 160 acres, and the cabin. We called it Blue Ridge Villas, Inc., and received our North Carolina charter on March 27. Pines'n Palms Ranches had 60% of the stock and Austin Davis had 40%, in the same ratio as in the former partnership. We started selling lots as early as the spring of 1974, and continued doing so without making any major campaign out of it. Most of the selling was done through my Pompano Beach office, but since the 1973 Arab oil embargo, sales were slow. It would not be until 1989 that all 49 of the lots were actually sold and the contracts were paid up in full. In the meantime there had been changes in the ownership of Blue Ridge Villas, Inc.

In 1977, Austin and Norma finally decided to get married. Soon thereafter, the close friendship Austin and I had enjoyed for 15 years suddenly turned sour. I feel certain that this was primarily due to the jealousy and at the deliberate instigation of his new wife. Anyway, for whatever reason, we decided to part company, and I bought out his interest in Blue Ridge Villas, and the cabin, and turned the stock over to Kim and Wait.

When, in 1983, Henrie and I sold our home in Lighthouse Point, Florida, and moved to North Carolina permanently, we moved into that same lovely cabin. In the meantime, there have been a number of changes, the addition of two double garages, a separate studio (for my artistic pursuits, such as they are) and changes in the ownership, but that is another story, and belongs in a future book

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Milestone Fifty-Five: Venture into North Carolina

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Milestone Fifty-Six: Hawk's Nest in the Keys

Even before we had our house built in Lighthouse Point, Henrie, Kim and I started exploring the Florida Keys, and we continued to be fascinated with them from then on out. Our favorite weekend outing most often was to take a trip to the Keys to Tavemler, to Pennecamp Coral Reef State Park with all its underwater wonders, to Plantation Key, to Islamorada, to Duck Key, to Key Colony Beach, to Marathon, and to Key West and all its many points in between. During our boating days we had taken our 23 foot Seabird down to Plantation Key in 1962, and our 36 foot Deep Six cabin cruiser to Key Largo and to Chesapeake Harbor at Islamorada in 1966. In 1972, when I no longer owned a boat, Henrie and I rented a 26-foot cabin cruiser and leisurely sauntered down to Plantation Harbor where we tied up for a week or so. It was here that I wrote a few chapters of Nature's Eternal Religion. But most of our trips were taken by car, a traveling distance of anywhere from a hundred to two hundred miles from Lighthouse Point, depending on where we decided to light.

One of our favorite eating-places when we first arrived in Florida was to go down to the Chesapeake House in Islamorada, where we would enjoy a full course Lobster Thermador dinner for $3.95, including key lime pie for desert. (Those days are gone forever!) Unfortunately, in 1960 Islamorada was swept by Hurricane Donna, and the Chesapeake House was completely gutted of its entire wealth of marine artifacts which adorned that atmospheric restaurant. The place was rebuilt, it changed hands, but it was never the same again.

For a number of years we toyed with the idea of buying a vacation place somewhere in the Keys. In fact, as early as 1959, I was inadvertently offered three waterfront lots in Key Colony Beach for some of my Klassen Enterprises stock. I made the deal, then sold the lots, since I didn't feel it was the right place. We looked at a number of cabins on stilts, we looked at a townhouse complex in Buttonwood Bay and came near buying, but we never seemed to find the right place.

In the fall of 1974 Henrie and I were moseying around in Marathon and we happened to notice a new, five story condominium in its completion stage. It was called Hawk's Nest. It was a time-sharing proposition, in which the customer could purchase a specified apartment for a certain week of the year, and it would belong to the buyer for that week ad Infinitum, guaranteed by a deed. The idea was not exactly new, but it was the first time we had looked into it, and it seemed to be catching on rapidly all over the country.

We looked at a furnished model apartment at Hawk's Nest and we liked it. The location of the condo was superb - at the southernmost tip of Marathon on Knight's Key, overlooking the famous Seven Mile Bridge. In fact, from the third, fourth and fifth stories, you could not only view the bright green waters of the Atlantic Ocean, but also those of the Florida Bay on the northerly side of the bridge. All in all, a choice location. The apartments came completely furnished with everything furniture, bedding, dishes, kitchen utensils, and even hot and cold running maids. Also included was a large swimming pool, a tennis court, (I loved to play tennis), a boat dock, including a couple boats that could be chartered for the price of replacing the fuel used. What a deal! We were impressed.

At the beginning of their promotion, the management had a "Love it or Leave It" proposition which offered the buyer a rental of an apartment for one week, and if they liked to buy later, the rental would apply on the purchase price.

On November 13, 1974, I sent the management a cashier's check for $315 to rent Apartment #201 for the 49th week, namely December 7th to 14th. However, the apartments were not quite ready as the builder had anticipated, and we stayed in apt. #501, on the fifth floor during the second week of February 1975. We greatly enjoyed it. While there, I negotiated a deal for the purchase of Apt. #501 for the 18th week (the first week in May) and also the 47th week (the third week in November.) When we got back home, I sent them two checks to cover the down payments on the two units, the total price on each being $1700 and $1900, respectively.

So we were back there again in our newly purchased apartment in May, and with us this time were Kim and Walt. Kim was pregnant at this time, but it did not seem to particularly curtail her activities. I remember Kim and Walt going out on a small sail skiff, going under the Seven Mile Bridge, and then due to adverse currents and wind direction, couldn't get back under sail power. However, no problem, a friendly boater towed them back to dock. Finally, on July 1, 1975, we purchased the third unit, week #46, so that we had two consecutive weeks in November, and one week at the beginning of May. We liked the whole set-up. Of course, there were yearly maintenance fees to pay on each unit, but they were reasonable enough. For the next eleven years we would religiously spend the first week in May and the last two weeks of November at our Hawk's Nest apartment. On a number of occasions we would have Kim and Walt as guests and on a few occasions we had Bill and Mary Wimmer. Since the last two weeks of November took in Thanksgiving and also our wedding anniversary on November 22, we would usually have a good dinner out on each occasion at some good restaurant, of which there were several in Marathon, or sometimes we would elect to go to Key West.

One restaurant that stands out in Marathon is the Buccaneer, where we had Thanksgiving dinner a number of times. I remember one such dinner with Kim and Walt and Scott when the latter was about a year old, which must have been in November of 1976. Walt strapped him into a highchair, and Scott started chewing on a hard roll. He still didn't have any teeth, but he gummed away at the hard roll and consumed it all before our regular dinner was served. While at the apartment we would usually go down to Key West at least one day on each occasion, sometimes twice. While in Key West we would visit the different tourist attractions, such as the Audubon House, or Hemmingway's one time residence, or Fort Taylor, or take the Conch Train, or take a boat tour around the Island. Usually we would have a good lunch at one of the many restaurants. One time we took a small plane flight to Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, which is about 60 miles due west of Key West. With us, besides the pilot of the plane was another couple. The plane, which had pontoons, landed in the water, pulled up on the sandy beach, and we took it from there. We had brought along a picnic lunch, which we ate soon after landing. The rest of the afternoon we spent exploring the ruins of the huge fortress, the historic place where Dr. Samuel Mudd was imprisoned for helping set John Wilkes Booth's broken ankle.

When we first started in 1975, conditions at Hawk's Nest were optimum. Boat rentals were free except for the fuel, maid service came in six days a week, yearly maintenance fees were reasonable. Then the original builder had financial problems. He went bankrupt and the banks took over. For a while there was no change, but the maintenance fees kept going up each year. After about five years we began to get reports that there had been faulty construction, cracks in the cement, chunks of plaster falling from the ceiling, and other problems. Soon there were a number of lawsuits by the owners association against a number of the contractors. Maid service was curtailed to once a week, but yearly maintenance fees kept rising to the point where it was no longer a worthwhile situation, especially after we moved to North Carolina in 1983. Whereas it had been a 160-mile trip from Lighthouse Point to Marathon, it was now over 900 miles from our cabin in North Carolina.

Finally, when the yearly fees for the three weeks reached $850, we stopped making the maintenance fees and decided to let the management, what was left of it, foreclose on our units. Our last stay at Hawk's Nest was the last two weeks of November, 1986. However, for the eleven years we owned them, we had many enjoyable moments, and I would say it was all very much worth the time and the money.

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Milestone Fifty-Six: Hawk's Nest in the Keys

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Against the Evil Tide - 58

Milestone Fifty-Seven: A Polyglot Meeting in Kansas City

1977

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During the 1970 s, as NATURE S ETERNAL RELIGION was finding its way into several of the key "right-wing" and racial organizations, I carried on an intensive correspondence with a number of people who headed such groups. One of these exchanges was with a fine intellectual lady by the name of June Grem, who headed a small group called Enterprise Publications, Inc., out of Oak Park, Illinois, an upper-class suburb of Chicago. Her main forte was money and economics, but her literature also included racial issues, mildly.

On August 20, 1975, I received a letter from her which said in part, and I quote, "I have just finished reading your book NATURE'S ETERNAL RELIGION and found it an exciting and creative book. We have all been so encumbered by myths, contrived political programs and religious differences that it is seldom that we get even a whiff of fresh air. Your book does just that. Also, the comments on the death-dealing concepts of Christianity give me an entirely new insight...."

She also had a number of contacts of her own, one of which was Robert B. DePugh, who in the early '60's organized a group called The Minute Men. Although I was less than aware of the group at that time, evidently this organization of revolutionary activists against the establishment was considered as a threat by the latter. As a result, as Bob DePugh tells it, he was framed by the CIA and the FBI in order to destroy him and his organization. He told me that these strong-arm hoods got up on the witness stand in court and lied like the professional troopers they were. Bob was finally convicted on some kind of gun violations and sentenced to a long term in the penitentiary. He actually served four years of hard time. Now, in the 1970's, he was a free man again, trying to put his life together. He settled in Norborne, Missouri, and set up some kind of a vitamin distribution business as providing a means of livelihood for his wife and six children. He also formed a number of front organizations and wrote a few books, one of which "Beyond the Iron Mask", describes his experiences while in prison, and advocates several measures of prison reform. I have read this book and have given my views of it in a letter I wrote to him on April 11, 1977. This letter can be found on page 76-77 of The Klassen Letters, Vol. 2.

By 1977 Bob DePugh has also formed a group which he called "Patriots Inter-Organizational Communications Center . It was an attempt to act as a central umbrella group to unite and coordinate all the "patriotic" groups in the country, a worthy-sounding goal, a goal we will further explore and evaluate.

Sometime in the spring of 1977 DePugh decided to hold a "Patriots Leadership Conference" during the Memorial Day weekend of the same year, and made extensive preparations to rally the "patriots" to the cause. The meeting was to be held in the Continental Hotel, at the corner of Baltimore and Eleventh, in Kansas City, Missouri. This hotel is not to be confused with the modem chain of Intercontinentals, but was an elderly relic of the turn of the century, or shortly thereafter. It was located in the downtown section of the city which by 1977 was showing many of the drab signs of decay and degeneration that was and is the curse of most of our American cities as the spread of the black plague continues.

I would probably never have made contact with Robert DePugh and his P.I.-O.C.C. (as he called it) at all, if it had not been for June Grem. She had known Bob for several years and now that she had read my book and heard about Creativity, she wrote Bob and suggested that he invite me to be the "key-note" speaker at his coming Patriots Leadership Conference. Bob, too, had received a copy of NER a few years previously and was somewhat familiar with our movement, but less committal about it than was June Grem. In response to her letter, Bob wrote me a nice letter of his own, in which he invited me to attend and speak at the conference, but frankly and realistically informed me as to what to expect. I quote from his letter:

"At this meeting you will find people ranging all the way from the most absolute religious fanatics to complete atheists. I have never yet known of any case in which a single person altered their basic beliefs as a result of attending one of these conferences. Your point of view is just as welcome and will be just as much appreciated as any other. If, however, you expect to actually win converts, it is a poor place to try." Further on, he added, "At these meetings we have no 'featured speaker' because doing so would offend almost every other person present, each of whom would consider his own leadership capacity to be equally important."

It was a fair assessment, and I understood the situation perfectly. I had not asked to be the "featured speaker". In fact, I had not asked to speak at all, nor even to attend. That was June Grem's idea. In fact, at that stage I was still debating whether it was worth my while to go to the meeting at all. I recalled a similar experience about nine months earlier, and it serves as a background.

In October of 1976 a dynamic and highly energetic young supporter of Creativity from Pasadena, Texas, had sent me an airline ticket to come speak to his group in Texas. His name was Reverend Mike Breda. Mike was one of those hyper people who could never sit still for a minute and plunged into situations before thinking it through. Some sixteen years earlier, while 18, he had held up a bank, and been sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary for armed robbery. After serving the major part of that sentence, now at 34 he was out in the open, had married, and had two young kiddies. He was living in Pasadena, a suburb of Houston, and was a successful painting contractor. Houston was booming at this time, and Mike was now making more money than he ever had before in his life. He had read my book and was now gung-ho to promote Creativity. He had previously become a member of the Nazi party, affiliated with Allen Vincent's group in San Francisco, and he still had strong ties.

Now he invited me to speak to his own church group in Houston. What with my expenses paid for, I gladly accepted his invitation. I wanted to meet with Mike and his wife and get to know them better, as well as help promote his small group of converts.

Mike picked me up at the Houston airport and first took me to his rented apartment where I met his wife Mary, and also the two little kiddies. Also at the apartment was Allen Vincent, who had just flown in from San Francisco a little earlier, and I now found out that he was also to speak at the meeting arranged for that evening.

Allen had organized a strong Nazi group in San Francisco Bay area, a group which he called the National Socialist Movement. They put out a fine 20-page magazine called "National Socialist", and also, along with James Mason, they published a glossy magazine called "Stormer". Allen had about 30 or so activist members in his group, and I had corresponded with him and his staunch aid, Charlotte Magnette, for some time. Now, in a surprise meeting, we got to talk to each other and exchange notes. I found him most congenial and informative, and meeting him was an unexpected pleasure. He was a big, burly hunk of a man with a pleasant personality, but intellectually no giant, and was handicapped with a limited education. At 40, like Mike Breda, he too was a painting contractor, and he too had spent considerable time in penitentiaries and reformatories.

Allen had also brought along his most prized possession, an hour-long color film entitled "California Reich". Although it was all about him and his group, neither he nor his organization had had any part in producing this documentary film. It was produced by two young students named Walter Parkes and Keith Critchlow, and had won an Oscar nomination as the best documentary of the year. The film was designed to frighten the Jews into coughing up more money into the coffers of the Anti-Defamation League and undoubtedly was highly successful. It greatly exaggerated the strength and influence of the small Nazi party, but on the other hand, was also a useful tool for the Nazis to utilize in their own recruiting and propaganda. Mike Breda had gone first class in renting a meeting room for us that night at which to speak. It was at an exclusive hotel in downtown Houston, where he had also reserved a room for me for the night. There were less than a dozen people at the meeting, which started at 8 that evening. Anticipating that I would be the sole speaker, I had prepared a lengthy, one-hour speech. However, Allen Vincent was first at the rostrum, and after introductions, his introductory speech about the film, and showing the hour-long film itself, nearly two hours had passed. When it came my turn to speak, I felt the audience had pretty well had it, and since my prepared speech had been tuned to the exclusiveness of Creativity, I felt that it was no longer appropriate to the occasion. As a result I discarded my prepared speech and spoke extemporaneously for about 15 minutes about the virtues of the White Race and the importance of our cause. I did leave a number of our books and literature, and the people at the meeting seemed highly receptive to it. Under the circumstances, that was the best I could do, and I let it go at that.

On appraising my trip, I felt that my performance was hardly worth the $200 Mike had spent on the airline ticket and other expenses, but I appreciated meeting him and his wife, as well as with Allen Vincent, and other members of Mike's group. However, I came away with one conclusion, namely that mixing ideologies and movements at the same meeting was a counterproductive exercise in futility, and something to be avoided in the future, even when such movements are friendly and even when they have a number of common goals.

With this as a background, we now return to the matter of the Patriots Leadership Conference to be held in Kansas City, Missouri. I finally decided I would go to the meeting. It would give me an opportunity to introduce my book. Nature's Eternal Religion, and the idea of Creativity to a number of important new people in the racial movement whom I had not met before. Besides, some of my supporters were going to be there, and this would give me the opportunity to meet with them personally.

At this time I had only the one book, Nature's Eternal Religion, but I did have a few other pieces of propaganda. I had already cut the LP record, Survival of the White Race. I had printed up 10,000 copies of the Federal Reserve booklet. I also had numerous copies of a four-page, tabloid-size flyer headed Questions and Answers about Creativity which are now recorded in C.C. No.71 of The White Man's Bible, and I had a few other pieces, such as "A Real Case Against the Jews" by Marcus Eli Ravage. June Grem had reserved a display table in the meeting room of the hotel, and she offered to exhibit my literature along with hers.

I prepared and wrote up my speech, and so, loaded up with books, records and literature, I took off in my Pontiac station wagon. I arrived in Kansas City around noon on Friday, May 27, and checked into my room at the Continental Hotel. I was soon contacted by Bob DePugh himself, and although a lot of other people were also arriving at this time, to my surprise, he came up to my room and spent an hour and a half discussing Creativity and listening to my views. He told me that he himself was a biologist by training and education, and he could well understand my strong leanings on the laws of nature. It was our first meeting. In all fairness to Bob, he gave me more than fair attention throughout the three days of the meeting. My only criticism of Bob, if any, is that he had so many diverse and divergent views swirling about him, he himself didn't seem to know where he stood.

Soon I met with a lot of new people, with many of whom I had corresponded. There was, of course, June Grem. There was a young fellow by the name of Lewis N. Mohimont, from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who had written to me an endless number of letters. He checked in at the desk at the same time as I did. There was Paul B. Hurley, from whom I usually received a letter a week, and he liked to sign himself as "Khalki, the Avenger". There was Else Christensen, head of the Odinists movement, who happened to be sitting beside me as we were listening to somebody's speech, and we introduced ourselves. There were several others with whom I had corresponded.

There were an endless number of speeches during the next 3 days. As Bob DePugh had warned me, there would be people there of all stripes, spouting their particular views. Most of the speeches were inane, a few of them, however, were outstanding. One of the most dynamic speakers at the meeting, in my opinion, was John R. Harrell, who headed up the Christian-Patriots Defense League, out of Flora, Illinois. Although small and ordinary in appearance, he was a real dynamo when he got on the speakers podium. He had been a United States Senator, had run into opposition with the power establishment. What the points of contention were, I don't know, but as a result of the hassle he spent seven years in the penitentiary. He was a man of real talent. Unfortunately, he was obsessed with the Christianity hoax which overshadowed all his other efforts. What a waste of outstanding talent, I surmised. Ardle McBreary, from Camarillio, California, was the Master of Ceremonies of the meeting and did a most capable Job. I will never forget his witty speech as he ridiculed OSHA on how they tried to tell farmers how to farm. Poor Ardle! Last I heard of him, he was in prison, having been part of The Order, and charged along with 30 some other members. Another great talent gone to waste.

Present, along with a considerable number of his cohorts, was Robert M. Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the UKA (United Klans of America). With Bob DePugh's cooperation, his gang had organized a lie-detector program to ferret out any suspected enemy infiltrators at this meeting. One entire floor of the hotel was blocked off for exclusive use of their "Inter-Organizational Department of Security", as they called themselves. They had five machines they called "stress-analyzers", and 120 people out of the 160 present volunteered to be analyzed. I volunteered to take the test, more out of curiosity than anything else. Evidently I "passed". According to a letter by Bob DePugh dated June 15, six of those analyzed did not pass, and four of these confessed they lied when asked some key questions about their loyalty. Then, of course, there were 40 people who did not volunteer to be tested.

Also memorable at this meeting was a real battle-axe of a woman by the name of Gerda Koch. Built like a battleship, she represented the epitome of the narrow-minded "born-again" spook-chasers. I remember her speech in which she tried to convince us that the United States and its constitution was based on Christianity. She had read some of my literature at June Grem's table, and as she started her speech, she fixed her baleful eyes on me, and without mentioning me by name, loudly proclaimed that there were some people here who did not believe in the supernatural. I smiled back at her.

There were Nazis, there were a number of Identity people, there were born-again Christians of Gerda Koch's stripe. There were also, I am sure, any number of government spies and agents, despite the Klan's security measures. Undoubtedly they were among those 40 or so who had not volunteered to take the lie-detector test. By and large, the so-called "patriots" were of the God and Country, Flag and Constitution mentality, and it pervaded the meeting as a whole.

On Saturday night we had our gala banquet in the main conference room of the hotel. We sat at round tables in groups of six. Bob DePugh had allotted me the honor of being one of three speakers at the dinner during this prime time. The man that spoke before me was a veteran retired judge from Alabama, I believe. He loudly and vigorously waved the flag and the constitution, and extolled the virtues of the confederacy and the Old South for good measure, all in the name of Jesus Christ, of course. He received repeated applause. Then it came my turn to speak. Bob DePugh gave me a fine introduction, and pointed out how tolerant and diverse this meeting was, and I was a prime example of its diversity. He was preparing the audience for a different viewpoint.

The subject of my prepared speech was that God and Country, Flag and Constitution were not the issue. The prime issue facing us as I saw it was THE ISSUE OF RACE, and unless we solved that problem, nothing would be accomplished and the White Race would be doomed. As I held up my prized book, Nature's Eternal Religion, I emphasized our need for an all-encompassing RACIAL RELIGION as a counterpart to the Judaism of the Jews. I pointed that we needed to reconsider our basic premises, that Christianity was not the answer, but rather it was the major problem that had gotten us into the mess we were in. To clinch my argument, I used the analogy of building aqueducts. If we cling to the erroneous premise that water will voluntarily flow uphill, and if we had built 10,000 aqueducts on that principle, but none of the aqueducts worked, then it was time to reconsider our basic premise and conclude that water didn't voluntarily flow up hill. Similarly, I argued, since we have constructed some 10,000 organizations based on God and Country, Flag and Constitution since WWII and we have gotten exactly nowhere in our fight for the survival of our race, obviously we were basing our efforts on some erroneous premises.

A Racial Religion, namely CREATIVITY, around which all of the White peoples of the world could unite, was the real answer, I said.

At the end of my speech, a stunned silence greeted me. Only a few of my staunchest supporters had the nerve to applaud, and mildly at that.

I had been sitting at a table with some five of the elite people of this meeting - Bob DePugh, John Harrell, Robert M. Shelton of the UKA, a Christian minister whose name I don't recall, and Ardle McBrearty. The Christian minister spoke up and protested we already had a common religion, Christianity. I chose not to challenge him, a mistake. I should have brought the issue out in the open and debated him and the rest of the Christians while I had the podium. I could have stood there and argued with the Christian elements for the next three hours. Perhaps I should have. However, I chose not to raise a ruckus. I felt that this polyglot crowd was hopeless. I sat down at my table. Bob introduced the next and final speaker.

At twelve o'clock I was in bed and asleep. There was a knock at my door. I thought perhaps someone had come to beat me up. However, it was a young man who wanted to tell me how much he had appreciated my speech, and he wanted to buy a copy of Nature's Eternal Religion with my autograph. Next morning I ran into a number of people who wanted an autographed copy of my book. After a good night's sleep and time to think it over, it was remarkable how many people agreed with me.

I listened to more speeches the next day, then at about noon on Monday I started back home.

* * * * *

During the drive back to Florida, I tried to analyze and assess the meeting I had just left. From my own point of view, I considered it had probably been worthwhile. I had sold a number of NERs, several LP records and disseminated a considerable amount of literature. Most of the 160 people there now were aware of Creativity as an alternate program and religion. Then I looked at it from the point of view of the organizers of the meeting and their objectives of "coordinating" and unifying the diverse and divergent movements, and I could only come to one conclusion - what a waste of energy and what an absolute exercise in futility. I for one was not any closer to the "born-again" Christians than when I arrived. In fact, I thought they were more stupid than ever. Nor did I have any more admiration for the Klan, nor the Identity people, nor for any of the other sects or segments. I had a feeling that my sentiments were mutual, and that none were closer together on any meaningful program, goals or common ideology. In fact, it all left me with a sense of frustration. When I considered that each person there had spent probably an average of $200 on travel, hotel and other expenses, and we multiplied that by
160, that amounted to about $32,000, and it was entirely wasted. I ended up with the conclusion I had already arrived at previously, namely that a polyglot society cannot long endure, and to try to merge a mess of polyglot organizations into a meaningful program or ideology was a pointless exercise in futility. In the future, I would continue to build Creativity as a coherent, consistent religious movement on its own merits, and avoid any conglomerates or coalition meetings.

* * * * *

When I got back, I wrote Bob DePugh a long letter summing up my impressions and conclusions of such meetings. The letter speaks for itself, and I quote it in full.

June 13,1977

Mr. Robert DePugh
Patriots Leadership Conference
Norborne, Missouri

Dear Bob:

It was real good being able to meet you and get together with the rest of the group assembled at the P.L.C. over Memorial Day weekend. I especially appreciate the private chat we had in the hour and a half after I got to the hotel Friday afternoon.

Now that the dust has settled, I would like to set down on paper my appraisals of the meeting and pass them on to you for whatever it is worth. This is being done from a constructive but critical viewpoint, with the hope that our gatherings in the future can accomplish more than in the past, and I am sure all of us want to do just that.

1. The most obvious impression of such a meeting is that every group wants to push its own idea, movement, pet program, or whatever, considering that it has the best approach, the most important issue, etc. Personally I am no exception, and frankly stated in my speech that in the CHURCH OF THE CREATOR we believe we have the TOTAL PROGRAM, the FINAL SOLUTION, the ULTIMATE CREED, and I believe it. Unfortunately not all of these programs mesh, and many of them are directly at cross-purposes with one another.

For instance, when I say that Christianity is the Jewish mind-scrambling process that destroyed the Roman Empire and plunged the White Race into a thousand years of superstition, ignorance, poverty and misery, then along comes Gerda Koch with her "born-again" fanaticism, we are definitely not pulling in the same direction in order to save the White Race. Nor do I find the Identity fanatics, who would like to persuade us that we, the White people, are the real Jews, are helping to identify the enemy and straighten out our thinking.

2. Be this as it may, the most discouraging thing about the sum total of speeches and programs presented, it seems to me, was the almost total confusion about (a) who the enemy was, or is, and (b) who are "we".

Without being clear on these points, all else is nothing but idle talk and playing meaningless childish games.

3. In the speeches I heard over and over again such phrases as the "enemy", the "government", the "bureaucrats", the "communists", and other similar vague protestations. I want to point out, as I did in my speech, that these are only manifestations, EFFECTS, of the evil cause, NOT THE CAUSE Itself. They are only the FRUITS, not the ROOTS of the evil tree. The real cause of 99 percent of all our problems, whether it be pornography, wars, the Federal Reserve, the I.R.S., drugs, communism, corruption, spread of niggers, or a thousand other evils, is the JEWISH NETWORK, the Jewish race as a whole. Most of the people at that meeting knew this basic fact of life.

Yet why were they so extremely reluctant to put the finger on the root of all evil the perfidious Jew?

4. Now we come to the other side of the issue - who are "we"? Unless you clearly identify the enemy, and clearly identify who is on our side, we are, of course, at a terrible disadvantage in fighting the Jew, who has no confusion whatsoever on these basic issues. I heard a lot of talk about "patriots", about the "great constitution", about our "great country", about all the heroes who had died in Flanders Fields, and much more such meaningless oratory.

The only meaningful group that I can identify with and means anything to me, that is worth fighting for and saving from extinction is THE WHITE RACE, not the country, the republic, the flag, or the constitution. When we talk about our country we are using a very loose term Indeed. Basically there are three major components of a country: (a) the real estate, (b) the people, and (c) its government. Now as far as the real estate is concerned, I think it is lovely and I have no quarrel with fighting for land and territory. BUT FOR WHOM? Is America worth fighting for just so that it can become the breeding ground for a mushrooming horde of black gorillas who hate us, who are parasites on our back and who are crowding us out of the very land we built with sweat and toll? I say no, a thousand times no, and yet this is the very thing America is becoming, a pesthole of mud races, with the diminishing White Man breaking his back to stupidly become the slave of his inferiors. Yet I heard very little about the issue of race. The Klan did say a few confusing things about it, but it wasn't very clear, nor was it much emphasized.

Coming to issue (c) namely government, can we be "patriotic" to a Jewish owned and controlled government whose every action indicates that it hates the White Race with a pathological passion and its every effort is bent on mongrelizing and/or destroying the great White Race that has created every civilization and everything that is good and worthwhile in life?

In this context of looking at parts (b) and (c) of a country, namely a mushrooming horde of mud races and a fanatic hostile Jewish government at its head, the term patriotism to our country, the United States of America, becomes less than meaningless. It becomes OUTRIGHT TREASON TO THE WHITE RACE.

In my book I point this out time and again: our first loyalty belongs to our own race the White Race, not to country, flag, constitution, Christianity, or other artificial creations in which our enemies are heavily involved.

What is your position on the question of loyalty to our own race?

5. Then we come to the issue of Christianity itself. From my research and logic it is the nebulous ultra weapon the Jews have used for the last 2,000 years with which to scramble, intimidate, confuse and manipulate the brains of the White Man.

The question is: are there or are there not spooks-in-the-sky, spooks looking over your shoulder threatening to torture you in a lake of molten sulfur should you not believe in them? Are these spooks for real, or are they an idiotic farce? Frankly, I have never seen any, my dad and mother never saw any, (although they foolishly believed in them) and none of my ancestors down the line have seen any. Nor have I ever met anyone, who is not a refugee from a nut-house, who has ever seen, heard, felt or smelt a spook of any kind, holy or unholy, nor any demons, devils, gods, angels, fairies (the winged kind) or any other spirits, spooks or what have you. All I have heard about them is nothing more than wild hearsay, without a shred of evidence, instigated by our enemies in order to confuse and destroy us.

So, before we go any further kowtowing to this spook nonsense, we should make up our mind, are they for real or are they a horrible fraud.

I have looked at the evidence long and carefully and come up with the only conclusion that makes any sense: they are a horrible fraud perpetrated on the White Race by our mortal enemy the perfidious Jew.

The situation is similar to a man offering you a million dollar check for your house, that say was worth fifty thousand dollars. If the check is good, he is offering you a fantastic price. If the check is phony, he is fraudulently robbing you of a very valuable possession. Before you play his game it behooves you to carefully check it out and make up your mind whether the check is good or whether it is fraudulent. You can't ignore that decision. And so it is with Jewish Christianity. I have thoroughly investigated this con- game and made up my mind. The evidence, reasons and logic are fully expounded in my book NATURE'S ETERNAL RELIGION, should you wish to examine the evidence further.

6. I was highly impressed with the tremendous speaking and organizational abilities that John R. Harrell seemed to display. It is unfortunate that he is so obsessed and confused about the (non-existent) spooks-in-the-sky story that he cannot see the enemy clearly. You can't be exalting the Jews as "God's chosen people" on the one hand and expect to fight that band of pirates on the other hand. It's another case of "a house divided", or like a race car driver stepping on the gas with one foot, but at the same time stepping on the brake even harder with the other foot. You can't win a race that way. Too bad. He is extremely courageous and very likeable. He could be a dynamic leader if he could only rid his mind of the non-existent spooks hang-up.

7. So we come to a general summation: can we reconcile all the elements of such a meeting - Gerda Kochs, the Identity adherents, the Tax Strikers, the Klan, the Minute Men, John R. Harrell, the Church of the Creator, etc., and unite them into a meaningful, constructive action? I say no. It cannot be done and it is useless to try. Adolf Hitler, in Mein Kampf, says that you do not unite and thereby water down, two (or more) different movements without destroying the main force which built the movement in the first place. From what I can see about the so-called "Right-Wing", "Conservative", or "Patriotic" movements they are so confused on the basics of (a) who the enemy is, (b) our own identity, and (c) what we are fighting for, that it is almost hopeless. Proof of what I am saying is the utter failure of more than 10,000 such movements over the last 60 years.

In contrast to all this confusion, I believe in our book we have founded a basic philosophy that is in tune with REALITY and the LAWS OF NATURE. We have identified ourselves, we have pinpointed the enemy, and set forth a meaningful and realistic program for the survival, expansion and advancement of the White Race, the most important value on the face of the earth.

Our program sets forth as its goal not only the survival of our race but its total victory, expanding until the White Race inhabits all the worthwhile real estate on the planet. No other course is possible. The mud races cannot compete on this crowded planet and can only survive if we foolishly subsidize them as we are doing now. When we do that, they breed at a rate that will exterminate the White Race. So the time in history has arrived when it will be one or the other. The Jew and the mud races have determined that we must be exterminated. Their program has been, and is, devastatingly effective. Only an aroused, united and organized White Race, polarized in a religious creed around the basic issue of race, will now stave off such a horrible disaster.

In Creativity we have such a creed.

Bob, I don't know whether this letter will in any way affect your future goals or activities. It is my hope that it will at least have some small effect in moving you more towards the vital issue of saving the White Race and away from the hocus-pocus of the spooks-in-the-sky myth, which has crippled the White Man's thinking since the days the great Roman civilization went down the drain. I know that you are dedicated, highly intelligent and looking for a better way to achieve results. I hope in this letter I have helped point the way. The White Race needs more courageous fighters like you.

Furthermore, I hope you have listened to the record SURVIVAL OF THE WHITE RACE by now and have given it some further thought. I look forward to hearing from you soon and hopefully we can get together again to plan further strategy for total victory.

For a Whiter and Brighter World!
Creatively yours,
B. Klassen, P.M.

P.S. After I finished this letter, I received your questionnaire about the meeting. The above will serve as an answer in greater depth. B.K.

(The above letter is one of five I wrote to Bob DePugh in 1977. The others can be read in Segment 31 of THE KLASSEN LETTERS, Vol. 2.)

There are some basic and unalterable lessons to be gleaned from this episode. They can be summed up in a few sentences: Just as a polyglot society is ungovernable and will ultimately destroy itself, so, too, is any movement or coalition of movements that is a conglomerate mishmash of conflicting, half-baked philosophies. We Creators will have no part of it, we will not cater to mugwumps sitting on the fence who cannot make up their minds. We will go our own way, build a strong, well-structured, well-conceived, healthy racial religion of our own, the first such comprehensive religion the White Race has had in 6000 years of its civilized history. We will not compromise, we will not adulterate, we will not water down our own consistent, comprehensive creed and program. It is the only way to go.
RAHOWA!

Against the Evil Tide - 58

Milestone Fifty-Seven: A Polyglot Meeting in Kansas City

1977

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Against the Evil Tide - 59

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Milestone Fifty-Eight: Putting THE WHITE MAN'S BIBLE Together

1980-1981

The idea of writing a second and more comprehensive book to bolster and under gird the Creativity movement grew slowly during the 1970's. As the movement attracted more and more supporters, and as I began to write additional booklets and theses, I became aware that there were certain areas which I had not covered in NER that were of major importance to the movement and needed to be spelled out. For years I had been thinking about the subject of personal health as one such area that needed specific guidelines. I felt that the present accepted medical concepts were based on erroneous premises, much as were our accepted political and religious beliefs and concepts. Furthermore, the American Medical Association, and the whole medical profession, was in the hands of the Jews, who had created a closed shop, making certain that their approach and their concepts were the only allowed practices and shutting out all others. For years I searched for answers, but could come to no logical conclusions. Henrie and I had collected dozens of books about a more healthful living pattern over the several years. We subscribed to "Prevention Magazine", to John H. Tobe's "Provoker" magazine and picked up any number of books in "health food" stores and elsewhere. We had read Adelle Davis' book "Let's Eat Right to Keep Fit", and a dozen more like it. We had toyed with the Reems' program and his hocus-pocus system of analysis by numbers. We went to the "health food" stores regularly and bought and consumed vitamin pills, mineral supplements, enzyme supplements. Pills, pills, pills. We kidded ourselves that these pills were "probably" doing us some good.

Then my analytical mind began to take note of a certain chain of events. Adelle Davis, one of the noted pioneers in the "health food" fad, died of cancer at the early age of 62. John Tobe also died of cancer, but at the age of 72. The owner of our favorite "health food" store in Pompano Beach, who was in his early fifties, was being treated for cancer. These, and other events brought me up short, and I said to myself, hey, wait a minute! There is something drastically wrong here. I stopped taking vitamin pills, all pills, completely.

Just about at this time, in the fall of 1979, my wife and I were having dinner at a Pompano Beach restaurant, the Flaming Pit. Suddenly, in the middle of the meal, within a matter of seconds, I felt the right side of my face becoming paralyzed. There was no pain, but I had no control over the muscles of my mouth (on the right side only), or of the right eyelid (I could not blink), or my cheek, or my forehead. I went to the bathroom to look in the mirror. The right side of my face had drooped. It was limp. I was justifiably alarmed.

On Monday, the next morning, I went to see my friend, Chet Sasadu, who owned a drugstore on Federal Highway in Pompano Beach. He immediately recognized the malady as Bell's palsy, a paralysis of the seventh facial nerve. I asked him if he could recommend a suitable doctor. Sure, his son- in-law, Dr. Timothy Harrell was a physician and surgeon. He would take good care of me.

I made an appointment with Dr. Harrell. The first thing he did was to put me through a series of endless tests. I had my blood analyzed, my urine analyzed. He sent me to four or five different clinics to be X-rayed. He even sent me to a clinic to have a cat scan done from head to toe, a contraption that takes pictures of the inside of your body by means of high frequency sound waves, for a (then) price of about five hundred dollars. I had been analyzed all right, but I hadn't been helped a damn bit.

Finally, he put me in the hospital, although I felt quite normal, other than the facial paralysis on the right side. Here a few other "specialists" came into my room and poked around, giving me more "tests." After lying in the hospital bed for three days and getting terribly bored, Dr. Harrell came in and told me that they would have to make an "exploratory operation" and cut open my right temple to "see" what was the matter. That did it. I said no way, I had had it. I fired the damn doctor and checked out of the hospital. Nevertheless, this whole caper and exercise in futility cost me a few thousand dollars, all of which were contributed to the coffers of the medical profession. A week or so later, my wife had an appointment with an herbalist doctor, an elderly gentleman in his early seventies. As a matter of accommodation, I drove my wife over to the doctor's office and walked in with her. The minute he saw me he said, I see you have had an attack of Bell's palsy. I said, yes, that's what they tell me. What can be done about it? He smiled and frankly told me there is not a thing you can do about t but let Nature take its course and heal. Sometimes it heals completely, sometimes only partially.

At about this time I happened to read a book titled "The Medical Runaround." it was written by a Dr. Andrew Malleson, a British physician who later migrated to Canada. It was not a great book, but it confirmed many of the suspicions that had been floating around in my mind for some time. A major caption under the title proclaimed "A Doctor Tells Why Today's Physicians Are So Useless." The gist of his book was that most of the time when a patient walked into a doctor's office with some kind of aliment, the doctor really had no cure. However, to earn his keep and make it seem that he was doing something to help the patient, the doctor would subject the patient to a number of "tests", and end up writing a prescription of some kind of pills or "medicine." Most of the time these pills were completely useless, in fact, even harmful. But, since the natural tendency of the body is to heal itself, most of the time the patients would get better on their own anyway, for which the doctor would get full credit. If the patient did not get well, then he or she would return to the doctor and get more of the same runaround, much to the doctor's financial benefit.

Also, at about this time I began reading literature put out by Life Science Institute, then located in Austin, Texas. It was headed by T. C. Fry, and besides putting out a number of excellent books, they published a magazine called "Healthful Living." Finally, I realized that here were the answers I had been looking for. Their philosophy and program was a complete departure from that of the A.M.A. and diametrically opposed to the conventional and "approved" medical practices. They claimed that all "medicines" were drugs, were chemicals, and were toxic and poisonous to the human body. They promoted the idea of healthful living that prevented sickness and disease from occurring in the first place, rather than allowing the body to degenerate into a state of poor health and then trying to "cure" the maladies. The best way to do this, they said, was to pursue a frugitarian diet, namely to eat fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, and to eat them raw, not cooked. Furthermore, they said, avoid the intake of all inorganic substances, such as vitamin pills, protein pills, mineral supplements, alcohol, or stimulants such as coffee, etc. Added to this was a regimen of proper exercise, fresh air, and, in fact just plain simple good living in accordance with the Laws of Nature. (See the Fourteen Points, page 9, of Salubrious Living.) All this not only made good sense, but fitted neatly into our own program of living in harmony with Nature and following its incontrovertible laws.

By no means were these ideas new, nor did they originate with T. C. Fry. They had been expounded and promoted for many decades by a movement called Natural Hygiene, of which undoubtedly the foremost writer and promoter had been Herbert M. Shelton. However, to the credit of T. C. Fry, he and his associates put new life into the movement by refining and clarifying its creed and principles, and greatly expanding their promotion. This, I decided, was what the White Race and the Creativity movement needed, and we embraced it as part of our own creed and program. We added one salient concept to this program, namely Racial Hygiene, or Eugenics, and decided to give the total package a name of our own. We call it SALUBRIOUS LIVING.

There were other important ideas, programs and areas that we needed to address. One of these was the issue of keeping the environment of this Planet Earth from becoming one huge polluted and poisoned pigsty. Another crucial issue that I had not covered in NER was the creation of money, and the operation of that tremendously powerful Jewish counterfeiting ring called the Federal Reserve Board and which most people believed was a government agency. I had written a comprehensive booklet on this subject in 1976, and I now wanted to make it part and parcel of our creed and program. There were several other subjects that I wanted to add, not the least of which was a thorough refutation of the Jewish hoax they called the holocaust, the claim that Hitler gassed and otherwise killed six million Jews during World War II. Some other vital areas were such subjects as Organic Farming and preserving our precious topsoil from being destroyed.

* * * * *

By the beginning of 1980 I set about in earnest to compile and publish such a basic book that would incorporate all of our total beliefs, our whole creed and program. While writing the first book, Nature's Eternal Religion, I had debated whether I should call it by that name, or call it the White Man's Bible. Now, with the second and more comprehensive book I felt the latter was the ideal title, and the White Man's Bible it was.

The first move I made to get the as yet incomplete collection of manuscripts into print was to find a printer. I contacted Mike Powell of Tribune Publications, Inc., who had been its vice-president and had printed NER seven years earlier. Confidently, I asked him if they were now ready, willing and able to print a second book I was putting together. Sadly, Mike informed me that his dad had sold the company a few years earlier, and that he was now no longer in the management position, but merely another employee. He very much doubted that the new owners would print my book, he said. (They were Jews, he hinted over the telephone.) However, he suggested that a former foreman that had worked for him, a Cuban by the name of Albo Arquimban, who now had a printing house of his own in Hialeah, might do the job.

Meanwhile, I was busy putting the machinery together so that we could do the typesetting in my home. Whereas in publishing NER we had had the printers do the typesetting, I realized that such procedure would be highly impractical if I had the printing done in Hialeah. It would not be possible to run back and forth every other day to proofread every few pages, as we had done earlier with NER. Besides, typesetting by a professional outsider is a very expensive business, running as much as $7 a page. It would add considerably to the cost of the book. I decided that instead I would get a typesetting machine, hire a professional typist, and do the job in my home.

I finally located a second hand AM Varityper machine from a leasing company in Miami. It was a real dinosaur and weighed a ton. I could lease the machine by picking up a defaulted lease from a previous renter, namely Dow Chemical Co. If I made six monthly payments of $408.19 each and completed the contract, the machine was all ours. On July 20, 1980, I signed a contract with the leasing company, made the first payment and they delivered the machine, which I had them set up in the den.

Next, I located an excellent typist who had had previous experience working with a Wang word processor. I paid her $5.00 an hour, and she proved to be highly competent. Her name was Ellen Henderson. She was an interesting character, a world traveler and adventurer who had traveled to and lived in some unlikely parts of the world. Her previous stint had been in Nigeria, where she had worked for an oil company. She started during the last week of July, a few days after I had the typesetting equipment set up. While she was typesetting, I was writing new material, and both my wife and I proof read the results daily.

On August 20, I signed a contract with the Albo Printing Company, located at 380 West 78th Road, Hialeah, Florida. Albo had put together a huge plant and he was most certainly practicing Racial Loyalty. Every employee in it was a Cuban. They agreed to print 20,000 books, 453 pages each, for a total price of $20,575. I made a $5,000 down payment and we were in business. Meanwhile, Ellen Henderson and I were grinding out the pages. Then, after a month, she had to leave for about five weeks in order to meet a previous commitment. She was back before the end of September, and furiously typed away to finish the job. My check register shows that my last payment to her was on October 16, for an amount of $293.00. This included a $100 bonus I had promised her if she would finish the manuscripts before her scheduled leave. She was on a deadline to meet another commitment for a job in Hong Kong, as I remember. In total I had paid her $1208.50 for her part in typesetting the copy.

However, our job was not completely done, and there were a number of additions and corrections that needed to be made. Somehow, with my wife's help, we tied up all the loose ends and took the results to Albo Printing.

Finally, on February 10, 1981, Albo completed their part of the job and delivered the first truckload of 12,800 books, then a second truckload of 7100 books, for a total of 19,900. On the same day I gave them a final check in the amount of $11,677,28. Their total printing costs came to $21,677.28, slightly more than the original projected $20,575, due to an adjustment of the number of pages printed, and the additional shipping costs.

So now we had our White Man's Bible. I had them stored in Jim Hundly's combination office and warehouse complex at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fourth Street in Pompano Beach, where I now had my office, and also stored our ample supply of Nature's Eternal Religion. Another milestone had been reached, probably the most significant of them all.

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Milestone Fifty-Eight: Putting THE WHITE MAN'S BIBLE Together
1980-1981

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Milestone Fifty-Nine: The Miami Herald and the Jews Take Note

On May 11, 1981, I received an order for one White Man's Bible, accompanied by a personal check in the amount of $6 from one Luther C. Alexander, Jr. Routinely, I mailed him the copy ordered. A few weeks later I received a call from Mr. Alexander saying he was a reporter from the Miami Herald, explaining that he was in the religious department of the paper, and he would like to interview me. I recalled that he had ordered a copy of the WMB and asked him if he had read it. He said he had. I then further asked him if he was Jewish. He said, no, he was not, he was Presbyterian (I believe, in any case, Protestant.) One more question, was he black? Yes, he was, he hurried to confirm. Did that make a difference, he asked. Well, I said, it might. I'd have to think about it.

I did think about it and I recalled how Playboy Magazine had once sent a black reporter to interview George Lincoln Rockwell about two decades earlier. Same old trick, I thought. After weighing the pros and cons, I concluded any publicity is good publicity, and the Miami Herald had a large readership. A few days later I called him back and said I would agree to an interview. We met for lunch at Denny's restaurant in Pompano Beach on June 23. He was accompanied by a photographer.

Alexander was a fairly decent looking mulatto, about 25 years of age, mild mannered, well dressed and polite. We talked for about two and a half hours, the photographer all the while taking pictures. I thought the interview went fairly well and that was the end of it.

A few days later I received another call from a certain Doug J. Swanson of the Miami Herald, saying that he would like another interview, that there were a number of questions that Alexander hadn't covered and that this was a bigger story than they had at first anticipated. I asked him the same questions I had asked Alexander. No, he wasn't a Jew, no, he wasn't black. I said, all right, I'll talk to you. We set up an appointment for 3 o'clock for the following Tuesday, June 30, again at Denny's Restaurant. This time Swanson did most of the questioning, and he was much more intensive than Alexander had been, but I had no particular difficulties with him.

Finally, a week later, on July 7, the story came out, presented as a feature story. It covered half a page on Page 1 of the Broward Section and continued with another half page on Page 4. My picture was in there twice, once on each page. Both the pictures and the headlines were relatively large. The headline on Page 1 blared, "'White Man's Bible' says whites, not the meek, shall inherit earth." Another sub-caption above it explained "I'm not at war with anybody,' says Ben Klassen, author of the White Man's Bible. I'm more a philosopher at work promoting what I think is a logical and intelligent policy. "' The major headline on the second half on Page 4 proclaimed "'White Man's Bible' revives Hitler's message of hate", also in equally large letters, with a boxed caption stating "Klassen concluded that the Sermon on the Mount, with all that blessed-are-the-meek stuff, was the work of a wimp... 'That's the Christianity that...has disarmed us and left us naked.'"

Well, so far, so good, and except for the fact that we are not haters, I could hardly take exception to anything they had said. Actually, the article was conveying our message of love for the White Race to tens of thousands of White people whom we had never reached before, and could never have reached otherwise. It came out and hurled into the teeth of the enemy ideas and charges that I had never before seen printed in the Miami Herald. Here are a few quotes the reporters selected that were highlighted with an asterisk:

'"Today's Black Plague is spelled niggers...We regard them as subhuman or humanoid."

*"The most deadly threat the White Race faces is the tremendous expansion of the mud races led by the archenemy - the treacherous Jew."

*"We must ship the niggers back to Africa."

*"We...declare everlasting war on the Jews, a war to the finish, until we have expelled them from all the lands inhabited by the white race."

*"To hell with the niggers, to hell with the Jews."

The article tried to attack our church and philosophy by attempting to make us look so extreme that we should look ridiculous in the eyes of the brainwashed American public. In this they did not succeed, in fact, the very opposite effect was achieved. By repeating in essence our creed and program with no holds barred, they effectively spread our message that the White Race was in serious danger of extinction, and that the Jews were behind it all. It also pointed up the urgency and the dire need of saving the White Race from mongrelization and extinction in a world being overwhelmed by a flood of niggers and mud races, a situation of which just about any and every sane person was already acutely aware, but did not have the foggiest idea as to what they could do about it. Furthermore, it brought out in the open an unspoken fear and concern that lingered in the minds of most White people, and gave them hope and direction that here was an organization and a religion they could join that could do something about what had previously seemed to them as a hopeless dilemma. Soon after the article ran, I expected all hell to break loose. The reaction was not long in coming, and the Jews were the first to respond. The phone started ringing. The first Jew that called pretended he wanted to buy my book, but I detected his identity immediately. Before he could get half way through his first sentence in unleashing his vituperative malediction, I hung up the phone. I left it off the hook for the next several days.

However, the real fury of their venom was expressed in the flood of letters to the editor of the Miami Herald for the next week or more. Not so strangely, their rage was not so much directed against me personally, (although plenty of it was!) but instead most of it was vented against the Miami Herald itself for having the gall to print the article in the first place.

Although the article stated our position as bluntly as they knew how, there were several errors in it, probably through misunderstanding, that I want to correct. One is that after I realized that I had been snookered by the Birch Society, by the Republican Party, by George Wallace, by Christianity, I asked myself this question: what can you really believe in? The answer to this I explained carefully, but evidently they either misunderstood, or they intentionally misrepresented it. What I told them, as I have also set it down in NER, after much soul searching, my answer was: you can believe in the Laws of Nature. They wrongly printed that I said you can believe in the White Race. Another is the differences between us and the Nazi party, an issue they also garbled. However, the article is reproduced in toto in the last two pages of our PORTFOLIO ONE, and along with it also is a resume of ten corrections we deem necessary.

In conclusion, I would say the Miami Herald article was beneficial and can be regarded as positive publicity, despite the fact that their intentions were meant for it to be derogatory. Although through the cloud of fear and confusion, most White readers were too timid in coming forward and contacting us, many of them did, and moreover, in many of those who did not, at least the seeds of racial consciousness and Racial Loyalty were planted for future pursuit.

In any case, the article did not slow me down in the least. I went right ahead with my plans of building the World Center, and with it, the publication of Racial Loyalty, our flagship.

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Milestone Sixty: Publishing the Third Book: SALUBRIOUS LIVING
1981-1982

In the White Man's Bible I had firmly established the nomenclature Salubrious Living and outlined its basic precepts. In the brief chapter describing its fundamental principles I had also hinted at a promise that we would later come out with an entire textbook on the subject, spelling out in more detail those basic rules, precepts and principles upon which Salubrious Living was founded, although at that time I had no idea where I might find such a book. Having done so, I immediately set about to search through various literature in the field of Natural Hygiene to find a given compilation that would fit into our philosophy.

By this time, 1981, I was subscribing to T.C. Fry's Healthful Living magazine. As luck would have it, they were at this time running a series, over a period of several months, reviewing Arnold DeVries' book The Fountain of Youth. At the same time, according to T.C. Fry, they were "cleaning up" the material to fit more precisely within their own more recent precepts. As I read the subsequent installments I began to realize that here was precisely the material I had been looking for. Then about two-thirds of the way through the book, they stopped the review. I called up T.C. Fry, whom I had met earlier in Austin, Texas, and asked him two questions. Number one, where could I obtain the rest of the material, and number two, could I use it to compile into a book. He kindly obliged and gave me the name and address of a man in New York who had the rest of the text. As far as the second question was concerned, he said it was not copyrighted, and was in the public domain. In fact, he welcomed any and all dissemination of their health information by whatever means.

I wrote the gentleman in New York and he did indeed have the remainder of the text and was kind enough to send it to me for the price of having the pages run off on a copying machine, a small price indeed. Now that I had it all together, I was most pleased with my windfall. It was exactly what I had been looking for, except that I felt that there was one more chapter that should be added to this to complete the picture. That chapter was on the subject of Racial Hygiene, or more specifically, Eugenics. This I complied on the basis of my own knowledge of the subject, and added it as Chapter 22. I also included an introduction which summarized our Fourteen Points, which are the basis of Salubrious Living. I was now satisfied that I had all the material I needed for that most important book I wanted to add to our creed and program. I could now more confidently claim that our creed embraced "A Four Dimensional Program: A Sound Mind in a Sound Body in a Sound Society in a Sound Environment."

Having complied the material into a finished product, I now again had the problem of finding a printer. Although Albo said he was willing to print the book, he was somewhat haughty and arrogant because of some of the nasty things I had said about the Cubans in The White Man's Bible. I called T.C. Fry for any further suggestions about a willing printer. He again obliged. He recommended Rose Printing Company, located in the Industrial Park, Tallahassee, Florida. Evidently Rose had done some printing for them before.

I called Rose Printing and made an appointment to see them. Henrie and I were going up to the cabin in North Carolina for a ten-day stay and I thought I could swing by Tallahassee on the way. I arrived at their huge plant located at 2503 Jackson Bluff Road at 9:00 A.M. on September 1,1981.

There I met with their designated account executive by the name of Lance Coalson. He was a handsome young man that looked every bit the up and coming business executive. He had, however, one glaring flaw. When we began discussion of the book I was about to get printed, he asked me what kind of church we were. I told him frankly we represented a racial religion and took a dim view of Christianity. Unlike a good business executive, Lance Coalson talked too much. He told me that although the owners (Rose) were Jewish, he himself was a born-again Christian, and, like Ron Bechtel some nine years earlier, tried to give me a stupid sermon extolling the virtues of Christianity.

I was willing to overlook and ignore his obvious indiscretions and get down to business. I asked him to get busy sharpening his pencil and figure out how much it would cost us to have them typeset the material, print the book and do the cover in full color. After some discussion, he said they would have to do some detailed figuring, but he could give me a ballpark figure of about $1.00 to $1.20 per book.

I left the material with him and said I would stop by again on the way back from North Carolina in about ten days.

At 9:00 A.M. on September 11th I met with Lance Coalson again and he had arrived at a firm price of $8,600.00 for ten thousand books. The artwork for the cover would be an extra $375.00, bringing the total close to $9,000.00. This was agreeable to me and I wrote him a check in the amount of $4,300.00 - half of the printing costs. I told him I would be sending him a copy of the introduction, and also the last chapter on Eugenics in the mail in a few days. All the while he belabored the subject of Christianity. Having concluded the transaction, I picked up Henrie at the motel and we left for home, arriving at Lighthouse Point at 9:30 P.M.

I thought the matter was settled and I looked forward to seeing my book in print soon. Exactly a month later, on October 11, I received a package in the mall, including a formal letter from a law firm in Tallahassee. Specifically, it was from Ausley, McMullen, McGehee, Carothers & Proctor, Attorneys at Law. Besides the heading, the names of a total of 23 attorneys belonging to the firm were listed on the letterhead, an impressive roster indeed. It took two groups, one on each side of the letterhead, to list them all.

Here is the text of the letter:

October 9, 1981

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Ben Klassen
Post Office Box 5908
Whitehouse Point. Florida 33064

Dear Mr. Klassen:

This law firm represents Rose Printing Company, Inc. When you and Lance Coalson first discussed the possibility of Rose Printing Company printing a book for you, you inquired as to whether Rose would be interested in reprinting your book entitled The White Man's Bible. You explained to Mr. Coalson the nature of that book and he indicated that Rose Printing Company was not interested in printing that type of material. Rose agreed to print your book entitled Salubrious Living based on the expressed representation from you that the book did not contain the type of material that Rose chooses not to print. When the introduction and final chapter of the book were completed and delivered to Rose, Rose learned that you had made a material misrepresentation as to the nature of the book Salubrious Living. Because of this material misrepresentation, Rose considers its initial agreement to print the book to be voidable and is exercising its option to rescind that agreement. Consequently, enclosed herewith please find we are enclosing a check for $4,300.00 which represents a complete refund of all monies paid by you to
Rose.

Very truly yours,
Michael J. Glazer

Shades of Universal Printing nine years earlier! I was angry. I had taken considerable pains to explain in great detail to Lance Coalson that we were a racial church. They had had plenty of time to think it over and reject the job between my first and my second visit. Besides, at no time had I asked Rose to reprint The White Man's Bible. We had 20 thousand copies on hand, enough to last us for the next ten years. I thought about suing.

I called up an old colleague, Jim Eddy, who was an attorney in Pompano Beach and was in the Legislature with me back in 1966. I explained to him what I had in mind and asked him if he knew of a suitable attorney in Tallahassee, a town that was swarming with lawyers. He recommended Mallory E. Home, who was in the Senate at that time. I called up Mr. Home and asked him if he remembered me. He said he sure did, and after a little chitchat, I explained the situation to him. Although he was very friendly and congenial, he backed off the case. He alibied that he was not qualified to handle civil rights cases, and explained that in any event, for a White Man to win such a case was next to impossible, and even to lose the case would probably cost me 100 thousand dollars. I soon saw his point.

Back to square one. I began to look for a new printer. I had a lead on two companies and immediately decided to check them out. I took a trip to Kissimmee and met with the account executive of Ray Cody Publications at 410 W. Verona St. This time I figured I would point out the word "nigger" in Chapter 22 right at the beginning so as to avoid a similar time lapse and delay if they were going to reject the book. The account executive was somewhat flabbergasted and decided to consult with the president. The president came into the office and had an agitated look on his face. No way, he said, they had too many good niggers working for them to take a chance.

That same day I drove on to see (Jerry) Scott Printing Co. located at 88 Merritt Island Causeway, Merritt Island. I spent about three hours with them. They were agreeable to printing the book, but quoted a cost that would run about twice as high as had been quoted by Rose. That made the deal unacceptable, as far as I was concerned.

Finally, I decided to give Universal Printing in Hialeah another try. As you will remember, they had rejected printing NER back in 1972 after I had laboriously explained the contents to the old man, and after they had signed a contract to do the job, and after they had taken my check.

After making an appointment I walked into the office to talk to the right man. There was Ron Bechtel, the son, who had brought back the NER manuscript to my office and lectured me about not letting Jesus Christ into my heart. Now, nine years older, he made no mention of our previous encounter, nor of Jesus Christ, and I had no particular desire to broach the subject either. Nor did I bother making any explanation about the contents of the book, as I had with Rose. He was cordial and very business like about it all. He explained that they had to do a volume run of 25,000 copies to really do an economic job. Also they did not do the typesetting. He quoted a price of $21,500 for 25,000 books, including a cover in full color. This was on October 13th, only two days after I had received the letter from the attorney representing Rose.

My next problem was to get the typesetting done, and also provide for the artwork, and for the design of the cover.

For the typesetting Job, Albo had given me the name of Jorge Diaz, a fellow Cuban. On October 19, I drove down to South Miami to talk to him. His studio was in the garage of his home at 13212 S.W. 86 Lane. After reviewing the material he agreed to do the whole typesetting Job for $650.00, which I figured was a real bargain. I told him to go ahead with the job.

I asked Diaz whether he knew of a good artist that could do a suitable design for the cover. He recommended a friend of his. On November 19, on our way to Hawk's Nest in the Keys, I stopped in at Jorge Diaz's studio and met with Oswaldo Ozon. I had given Diaz a brief description of what I wanted on the cover, and now Oswaldo showed me a preliminary sketch of that concept. He said he would do the finished painting for $40.00, another bargain. I told him to go ahead.

On December 6, on the way back from the Keys, I stopped in at Jorge Diaz's studio and picked up the finished typesetting and also the completed painting by Oswaldo Ozon. The painting is as can now be seen on the front cover of Salubrious Living, and I was very pleased with it. I paid Diaz the balance of the $650.00 and also gave him a check in the amount of $40.00 to relay on to Ozon.

The next day, December 7, I went to see Ron Bechtel at Universal Printing. I left him all the typeset material and also the artwork for the cover. I told him I was ready to go ahead on the deal as soon as he could draw up the contract. At 2 P.M. the following day I was back in Ron's office and brought along a redesigned format from a place mat for the back cover. We signed a contract and I gave him a check in the amount of $10,000 to bind the deal. There still remained a lot of proof reading and correcting to do on the typeset pages. On December 28, I felt satisfied that we had it all together and I took the whole collection back to him to start printing. By this time he had completed the four-color layout for the front and back cover for me to examine. I was satisfied with it. Three days later, on the last day of the year, I stopped in at Ron's office again and examined the paste-up of all the pages.

Everything seemed in good shape and we were in business. On January 20, 1982, Henrie and I drove back to our cabin in North Carolina, arriving there the next day. Soon the first of the Salubrious Living books were to be finished, and I called Universal to send out two cartons of 36 each by bus to Dillard, Georgia. Finally, on January 29, they arrived at the Clayton bus station, and I had my first look at my newest book. A real winner!

On February 9th, while still at the cabin in North Carolina, a huge truck I had chartered at a cost of $672.92, arrived with 417 cartons, 20,016 copies, of Salubrious Living. It was raining and the driver, whose name was Gene Canipe, needed some extra help to unload all of this huge 45-foot truckload. I called Billy Sanders and he sent one of his carpenters, Earl, to help do the job. They unloaded it all into the newly built garage #2, which was just barely completed. It filled practically all of the two-car garage.

The next day Henrie and I started back to Lighthouse Point. A few days later, Universal Printing delivered the rest of the books they had printed to my office and warehouse at 500 NE 24 Street. These amounted to 2544 books, bringing the total to 22,560. This was 2440 short of the 25,000 I had already paid for. They settled amicably and sent me a refund for the difference, and the transaction was completed.

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Milestone Sixty: Publishing the Third Book: SALUBRIOUS LIVING
1981-1982

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Milestone Sixty-One: Building the World Center of the Church of the Creator

1982

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As early as 1974 I began thinking of building a central headquarters structure for our movement. The first question that preoccupied my thinking was not so much as to where I would build it, nor how I would pay for it, but what architectural style or motif I should choose that would best exemplify our innermost creed and program. Should we try to emulate the classic Greek and Roman type of architecture in the style of their "Temples" and call our churches temples also? Or should we go back even further in the White Man's civilization and try to salvage something from the Ancient Egyptian culture and their great pyramids? Or, should we try to adopt something from Hitler's Nazi era as a role model?

For a long time I mulled it over and gave these questions a considerable amount of thought. I wrote one of our supporters, a man by the name of Emory Burke, who was an architect by trade. He was from Eclectic, Alabama, and had visited me in Pompano Beach in August of 1973. I remembered that he had said that he specialized in the design of churches. In April of 1975 I wrote him a letter and asked him for some suggested design sketches for our particular church. He came up with some kind of a Runic sketch that was in the style of a primitive "A" frame that fronted in four different directions, and looking down on it from the top, was in the shape of a cross. Apparently it represented something the early Vikings had built, so he said. I wrote Burke again, asking if he might come up with something in the Roman style, or perhaps the Western Frontier motif. However, I never did hear from him again.

After mulling all these ideas over for some time, I wasn't really too happy with any of them, with one exception. The pyramid idea was totally impractical, and we didn't really relate to the early Egyptians that much. Nor did we want to be represented by the Neo-classical architecture of the Greek-Roman tradition, although we greatly admired their civilization and culture. As far as the Nazi era was concerned, I could find nothing specifically distinctive about their architecture that could be pinpointed. The Viking sketch was at best too primitive, and it, too, was not us.

The motif inherent in "The Winning of the West" began to grow larger and larger in my mind as representing the best of what we were trying to project to the world. Why not adopt that as our leitmotif? Why not, indeed? I felt that I had finally come up with an answer. I began to look with keen interest at the buildings of the old Western towns in Colorado, Arizona, California, Texas, and other states. I also scanned with renewed interest the old Western movies and their settings and scenarios.

Having more or less resolved the architectural styling, I now began to concentrate on location. Where should we build it? I had a 2-1/2 acre piece of property in Pompano Beach that lay about a quarter of a mile north of Sample Road and some distance west of the railroad tracks. For some time I considered it as a probable site. But the more I considered the future ramifications of what we were doing, the less I liked that site. After all, if our movement was successful, this would become sacred ground, a Mecca for the White Race, a geographic shrine. Pompano Beach, with all the niggers expanding in the area, the Jews moving in to Deerfield Beach just north of this area, not to mention all the Cubans, Haitians, South American refugees and other mud races taking over South Florida in general, this was hardly an auspicious selection for the location of such a momentous and historic center. Besides, two and a half acres was too small an area to expand from, and furthermore, any kind of security for our headquarters would be next to impossible in such a crowded and hostile environment.

All this led me to gravitate more and more towards North Carolina, where I had (at that time) as much as 50 acres at my disposal in a beautiful valley lying between picturesque mountains in the background. Furthermore, this idyllic and rustic locale was set in the peaceful and romantic Blue Ridge Mountains, an ideal spot indeed. There was one drawback, however. All of North Carolina lay in the so-called Bible Belt, and I was woefully aware that the fanaticism of born-again Christians could be as vicious as that displayed by our mortal enemies such as Jews and niggers. However, at least we would be in White territory, and the lesser density would give us considerably more room in which to maneuver. No sooner had I come to this conclusion than I pinpointed a nice knoll in the valley along the road between our cabin and the Old Georgia Road.

The more I thought about the location the more enthusiastic I became about the selection and soon I started drawing up sketches and different ideas for the building itself. These I took to my old friend Cranford Sproul, who was an architect in Pompano Beach. You might recall that it was he who was the John Birch chapter leader when I first joined that society back in 1963. In any case, Cran drew up a creditable design from my sketches, dedicating his time to the cause. For this I was ever so grateful, and although it was by no means the final design, it was an important beginning.

After playing around with the initial design for some months, I contacted a local architect in Franklin, North Carolina. His name was Jack Patton, who in turn was recommended to me by Billy Sanders, a contractor who had done some work for me before.

On Tuesday, September 8, 1981, I got together with Jack Patton at our cabin in North Carolina. We met at 10 A.M. and for three and a half hours we discussed the design and the plans for a contemplated Church headquarters building. I found him compatible and cooperative. I was to employ him again in several other projects.

The next day I went to the contemplated building site in the cow pasture and set the corner stakes for the approximate acre of land on which the building would sit, and also the stakes for the approximate location of the building itself. My neighbor, Jerry Ayers, whose cows were in the fenced pasture, was with me.

On January 21, 1982, Henrie and I were back at the cabin again, and two days later I again met with Jack Patton. He had done a considerable amount of work on the plans, all of which we reviewed, but It was not until the next Tuesday that he brought over the final and almost completed plans. I gave him an initial check for $250. The next day, January 27, he completed the finishing touches and left me with four sets of blueprints.

At 9 in the morning of Saturday, January 30, 1982, I met with my contractor. Billy Sanders, at the cabin. Billy had done several small jobs for me before, such as building two separate double car garages, some modifications on the cabin, and I had complete confidence in him. We went over the blueprints in detail, discussed building materials, and went over the building site itself, where he now reset the exact corner stakes of the building. Altogether our conference lasted for five hours. I told him to work out a firm commitment on the total price.

The following Monday I had a similar meeting with another contractor, Harold Kimsey, who had built our cabin back in 1974. Although I had pretty much decided that Billy Sanders would get the contract, still, I wanted to have a competitive bid to make sure I was getting a fair price. That meeting with Kimsey lasted from 9 in the morning until 12 noon.

The next day, Willard Barrett and his crew from the Nantahala Power & Light were out to set the stakes for the power pole for the church. From their conversation, I began to detect a morbid curiosity as to what KIND of a church we intended to build. (When one of their trucks stalled, the foreman suggested some demons must have gotten into it.) On February 5 they were back and installed the power pole itself and hooked us up to their power line.

Four days later, after selling three more lots in Bavarian Village, and one in Swiss Village, Henrie and I left the cabin and headed back to Lighthouse Point. On February 27, I talked with Harold Kimsey on the telephone about the contract. He had completed his calculations and came up with a bid of $151,450, which included $22,000 for outside insulation, plus $8,000 for two 4 ton air conditioning units, a 1000 gallon septic tank and necessary drain lines, plus steel trusses for the first floor.

On March 7, Henrie and I loaded up the station wagon and headed back to North Carolina again. On March 9, I had a meeting with Billy Sanders to finalize the building contract. He agreed to a bid of $128,800, which included everything that I had discussed with Harold Kimsey. We both signed the contract and we were in business. The next day, March 10, 1982, was an important milestone for our church, which we later chose to call Foundation Day. Billy Sanders was out with his survey crew and set up various stakes. Henrie and I were out there with our camera taking pictures for posterity. At 10
A.M. Dean Connor and his crew arrived with their bulldozers and front-end loaders and started excavating and moving dirt. That same day I also met with Charlie Davidson, a well driller from Franklin, and negotiated a contract for drilling a well on the church site. He agreed to drill the first 100 feet for $10 a foot, and any succeeding depth necessary to bring in sufficient water, at $8 a foot. He was scheduled to start drilling on May 1st.

On March 15 Henrie and I left the cabin and started back for Florida. On the way south I stopped to talk to "Happy" Howard Williamson, who owned Radio Station WVMG at Cochran, Georgia. He had attracted my attention due to the fact that he had become heavily embroiled with the city management of that city of 7000 in exposing their corruption. For his philanthropic efforts, he had been physically attacked, beat up, and had landed in the hospital. Now recovered, he was carrying on his fight. My purpose in seeing him was to find out whether he might be a suitable candidate to take over the leadership of our church in the future. I gave him copies of our three books, and discussed our program with him and his sidekick, Wayne Gordon. A week later I called him from Florida to get his reaction. He seemed to agree with us, but nothing further came of our meeting.

Having left the blueprints in Sanders hands, and having him well started on the project, Henrie and I decided we would take a prolonged trip to parts West, especially to see Kim and Walt and our grandchildren in Colorado, where Walt was practicing Chiropracty in association with another doctor in Colorado Springs. We left Lighthouse Point on April 3, and there were enough events on that trip to leave that story for another chapter, which I will do.

In returning from that trip we headed for North Carolina, and arrived at the cabin at 9:40 P.M. on April 22. First thing the next morning I went down to the building site and checked with Billy Sanders as to the progress of the project. The basement walls were up, and looked somewhat higher than I had anticipated. The workmen were spreading crushed rock on the basement floor, getting ready to put in the rough plumbing and pour the concrete for the floor. Meanwhile, Sanders had ordered the steel beams for the first floor, and was waiting for their arrival.

While on the trip, I had thought of two changes I wanted to make in the design. One was to add a dormer over the second floor entrance, and the other was to extend the large beam at the top of the front facing so that it would extend about three feet on each side, purely for architectural effect and to enhance its Western look. Two days later we left for Florida, arriving home on April 26 to a pile of mail that needed attention. We had traveled a total of 5801 miles since we had left Lighthouse Point on April 3.

After answering a number of letters and shipping out a considerable backlog of COTC books and literature, Henrie and I prepared to take off for the Keys and our week at our time-sharing apartment at Hawk's Nest. On the morning of Saturday, May 1, I called Billy Sanders on the phone. He informed me that they had poured cement capping over the basement walls, and by now they had received the steel beams. The weather projection looked good until next Thursday, and they would probably have the beams in place by that time. We arrived at Marathon and the Hawk's Nest at 4:30 that afternoon.

We relaxed and had an enjoyable week in the Keys during which time I read "Physicians of No Value", given to me by its author. Robe B. Carson, who went under the pseudonym of Miles R. Abelard. He was one of our staunch supporters, and his book was a critical analysis of Christianity. While in the Keys Henrie and I also drove to Key West, as we usually did on each of our trips to Hawk's Nest. We had lunch at the Pier House Restaurant and visited the Martell Gallery and Museum. This heavily structured old brick building was originally a Union fort, built in 1862, and now renovated.

Back to Lighthouse Point the following Saturday and to a heavy accumulation of mail. A few days later, on Tuesday, May 11, I received a long distance call from Kim Kimmins, a reporter from the Franklin (North Carolina) Press. With an ominous note in her voice she informed me that there were wild rumors circulating in Franklin and surrounding Macon County. She claimed that the rumors contained reports that our church promoted blood sacrifice, devil worship, animal slaughter, kidnapping and Nazism. She wanted to find out all about it.

We talked for over an hour. She mentioned the ADL several times and what they said about us. Obviously, the ADL had instigated the sudden interest in our church and wanted to make sure we were thoroughly smeared before we even had our headquarters finished. They had sent Kim Kimmins a copy of the 1981 Miami Herald smear to get started and filled her in with a passel of misinformation as a further supplement.

That evening Billy Sanders, the contractor, called and asked if it was alright to give the reporter the three basic books (NER, WMB, and SL) I had given him earlier. I said, sure, why not? He sounded pretty apprehensive about the rumors.

The next day I called up Ed Gibson of the Swain Insurance Co. and told him to increase the amount of the insurance on the cabin and the two garages I had built by about $13,000, and also put $25,000 on the SL books I had stored in one of the garages. That night I also talked to Billy Sanders again and he informed me that the steel beams were in place and the ground floor had been poured. He suggested we get insurance on the church project while under construction. He said that we were now the main subject of conversation in Macon County and today's big, glaring headline on the front page of the Franklin Press was "Pro-Hitler, Anti-Christ Leader Headquarters Here."

The following Monday I called up Gene Huscusson, an insurance agent in Franklin, with whom a few weeks earlier I had discussed placing a considerable amount of insurance on the church while under construction. I told him to go ahead and put a binder on the project as of now. At the previous session he was most amiable and glad to get the business, but now, with all the bad publicity we were getting, he preferred to play the coward and backed off. The same day I received a call from Dean Connor, the grading contractor, who had put in all our roads in our two subdivisions and had done the excavation work at the church. He had agreed to be our Resident Agent for the COTC incorporation, and his name was on the North Carolina State records as such. Now he was running for a seat on the County Commission, and one of his opponents had discovered his affiliation with our church and was using it against him in the campaign. He was angry and wanted his name off the records.

I tried to take it all in stride and not let it bother me any more than necessary. After all, we were a legally constituted church, and I had anticipated harassment and opposition from the beginning. What took them so long, I wondered. However, ten days after the nasty article appeared in the Franklin Press, Henrie and I were back at the cabin in North Carolina to check out the situation and the construction progress of the building.

On Monday, May 24, I met with Billy Sanders on the site, and also with Ronnie Holland and his crew of three who were laying blocks for the walls of the first floor. Billy informed me that a few days after the vicious article came out in the Franklin Press, he and members of his crew had received threats and anonymous phone calls to immediately stop work on the building. If they did not, the threats stated bluntly, some men with rifles would fire on them from the hill across the road. Naturally, this gave them pause, and they had stopped work for a few days. Then, they decided to bring their own guns with them and continued with the construction.

That same day, May 24, at 5:30 in the afternoon, as I was driving down the road to the church, Robert S. Scott, reporter for the Asheville Citizen, was on his way up to the cabin to see me. He had not made an appointment, but I decided to talk to him anyway, and we sat down on the deck of the cabin and talked. His article in the Asheville paper the next day was much more objective, but he apologized that half of what he had written (mostly the favorable stuff) had been cut.

Several months earlier Henrie and I had made plans to attend the World's Fair being staged at Knoxville, Tennessee. The next morning at 10 we left for the Fair. After having a big lunch in one of the Fair restaurants, we attended the Saudi Arabia Exhibit and also the U.S. Exhibit that afternoon. We then left for Pidgeon Forge, about 29 miles distant, where we had reservations at the Wonderland Motor Lodge. After having a hearty dinner at the nearby Hearthside Restaurant, we called it a day. After rummaging around the Old Mill and its immediate shopping center in Pidgeon Forge, we left after lunch and drove back over the Smoky Mountains "hump" and back to the cabin. On the way through Franklin, I picked up a copy of the Franklin Press, and also a copy of the Asheville Citizen. The former had three nasty letters to the Editor about us, saying something to the effect that the Church of the Creator should be run out of the county. The Asheville paper was more tolerant, but, according to Bob Scott, the reporter, his editor was not.

A few days later, May 31, I had lunch with Bob Scott, and asked him about the set-up at the Franklin Press. He informed me that the owner was Jerue Badd, of Spartanburg, S.C., who had a chain of about 20 newspapers. Bob Sloan, the former owner of the Franklin Press, was now its editor. They had two reporters, Scott McRae, and Kim Kimmins, the latter having written the nasty article about our church. She was a member of Jehovah's Witnesses. Bob Scott informed me that he himself was formerly a Presbyterian, but now belonged to the Methodist church.

On June 3 I sent a check to the Swain Insurance Co. in Bryson City and tied down an insurance policy that would cover us during construction of the church. That same day Charlie Davidson set up his churn drilling rig on the church site and started drilling. After checking further construction details with Billy Sanders the next day, Henrie and I left for Florida.

A few days after arriving back home in Lighthouse Point, I talked with Dr. Herb Poinsett, who informed me that an article had appeared in the Pompano Beach Sun Sentinel, and also in the Miami Herald, about the fact that we were building a church in North Carolina, having picked up that information from the Associated Press and the Asheville article. A few days later I talked to Billy Sanders on the phone and he informed me that they now had the second story framework up and the siding on. Checking with the well driller, he informed me that the well was now down to 185 feet and into 35 feet of rock.

On June 23 Henrie and I left for North Carolina again and arrived at the cabin at 4 P.M. the next day. I stopped at the church and checked the building progress with Billy Sanders. The roof was now on and the internal brick flue was going up rapidly. During our trips back and forth from Florida to North Carolina, I had picked up a pair of cast iron bells at an antique shop in Clarksville, Georgia. The day after arriving back at the cabin I went into Franklin and bought a spray can of Rustoleum and a can of gold metallic paint and painted the two bells that now adorn the facade of the church. That afternoon I had a meeting with Charlie Davidson, the well driller. He informed me that the well was now finished. It was 207 feet deep and into 57 feet of rock. We now had an excellent supply of water, at least 30 gallons per minute, he informed me. We decided on a 3/4 H.P. pump ($459) and a 44-gallon pressure tank ($155.)

During the next few days (a) I met with Sanders at Nantahala Lumber Co. in Franklin and decided on the different selections of wood paneling for the different walls inside, the type of vinyl for the flooring, and also the counter tops. (b) The roofers completed putting the shake shingles on the roof. (c) Met with the painter, Vie Sanders, and decided on outside colors, (d) Met with Arthur Provenchal of Sprinkle Surveyors and showed him where to place the corner stakes for the one acre plot on which the church was to sit. (e) Met with Bob Scott, the reporter, again, and asked him to check out whether Jerue Badd, the publisher of the Franklin Press, was a Hebe. Then, on July 3, Henrie and I left for Florida again, arriving home the next day.

We were back in North Carolina again July 29 and stayed until August 6. During this time there were a number of details to check out and attend to. The building site was now ready to have the dirt filled in around the basement walls, and grading the yard around it. Dean Conner, who was still in the political race, was reluctant to be seen working on our project. I therefore lined up Doyle Byrd, another heavy equipment contractor, to do the job. This he did the following week.

In the meantime, the one-acre plot had been surveyed, and my attorney, Richard S. Jones, of Franklin, had drawn up the deed conveying the property to the Church of the Creator, and had sent it to Lighthouse Point. On August 12 I signed it and sent it back to Jones to have it recorded. On August 23 I left for North Carolina again, this time by myself and on this trip I used the VW Rabbit (diesel.) Arriving at the building site the next day, I discussed the following items with Billy Sanders: (a) library shelves, (b) fill for the driveway, (c) colors for the drywalls, (d) brick pattern in the concrete porch on ground floor. Then I went into Franklin and picked out the paneling for the upstairs bedroom walls. That same day I called up George Dietz and arranged to see him the following Monday. On Thursday, August 26, I cranked up the VW and left the cabin and drove 400 miles to Louisville, Kentucky, to attend a convention the Universal Life Church was sponsoring. Arriving at 7 P.M. that night, I checked in at the Ramada Inn, where the meeting was to be held. In the lobby next morning I happened to run into Larry Harrison and his wife Mary, from Jacksonville, Florida. I had been corresponding with Larry for some time, and we were both surprised to run into each other. Larry introduced me to Kirby Hensley, the then 73-year-old head honcho of the ULC. I attended the meeting and listened to the speeches most of the day, interrupted only by having lunch with Larry and Mary. At night they came over to my room, and over a few highballs, we had a good rap session. Next morning I attended the morning session, and after being thoroughly bored with the vapid speeches and proceedings, I left the meeting at 11 A.M., checked out of the motel and headed for Spencerville, West Virginia. I drove 300 miles that afternoon and evening and checked in at the Grandview Motel. I called George Dietz and asked him if it was all right with him if I saw him tomorrow, a day early, since I had previously made the appointment for Monday. He replied it would present no problem. In the morning I headed for Reedy, then to George's home about five miles west of town and arrived at 9:30 A.M. After meeting with him, his wife, his daughter and her boy friend, we all had a good Sunday morning breakfast together, compliments of Mrs. Dietz. I talked with George until 1:30 P.M., then left to see Bill Parsche, who lived at Smithville, West Virginia, about 50 miles distant.

Bill was one of those intense, hyper persons. He had read my books and there was a period during which he wrote long, militant letters to me just about every other day. I had some trouble finding his place out in the country, and when I finally did find his ramshackle farmhouse it was so cluttered inside it was impossible to find a place to sit down. Bill had been a strong supporter of Dietz some time back, but evidently they had a falling out. Now Parsche was gung ho for Roger Elletson, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, who had written several books on finance and the Jews. It was this subject I wanted to talk to Bill Parsche about. Although he blustered and fumed and talked profusely, Bill made absolutely no sense, and I felt my visit with him was a waste of time.

I arrived back at the cabin on Monday at about 7:30 P.M. and the next morning checked what progress had been made at the church. There had not been much activity and nobody was on the job that Tuesday. I called Dean Conner about grading the roads in the two subdivisions. Next morning I left for Florida again.

More than a month later, on October 5, Henrie and I headed for North Carolina again, arriving at the cabin the next day at 3:15 in the afternoon. About two hours later our friends of long standing, Bill and Mary Wimmer, from Lighthouse Point, arrived. After a congenial visit, we went to Tallent's Steak House in Franklin and we all had a good prime rib dinner. The next morning I showed Bill and Mary the church premises, after which they left for Atlanta to see their nephew, David Johnson and his wife Beth.

Ever since I started building the church I had been planning to find a good reliable key man to help me put out the paper and run the operation. A young man by the name of Timothy J. Gaffney from Schenectady, New York, had read my books and had been corresponding with me for a few months. He was 27 years old, married, and was a college graduate, now an accountant with the State of New York. He was head of a small group called The National Force and Order, and they were vigorously distributing anti-Jewish literature to the point where even the Jewish Press took notice of them. I had mentioned to him that I was looking for a key man, and he seemed ready, willing and able to leave New York and take on that job. After making arrangements, I met Tim at the Asheville Airport at 3 P.M. on October 9, and we drove back to Franklin, where we enjoyed a steak dinner at Tallent's Steak House. We then drove to the church, where I showed him the layout, including the upstairs apartment, where they would live if he took the job. Since the stairs had not yet been built, we had to use a ladder to get to the second floor.

We put Tim up at the cabin overnight and we talked about the job and our program until 11 o'clock that night. He seemed eager, enthusiastic and dedicated. He agreed to take the job. Next morning we had breakfast in Dillard, then I took him back to Asheville to catch his flight back at 11:05 A.M.

Henrie and I stayed on a few more days during which time the outside wooden stairs were built to the second floor; I contacted Imperial Carpeting and selected the floor coverings and carpeting (cost: offices downstairs $270, upstairs living room and two bedrooms, $1387, for a total of $1657); met with Vernon Smith of Franklin and arranged for lawn and landscaping at both the church and at the cabin; and lastly, had Dean Conner finish grading the grounds around the church and cover the parking lot and circular drive around the church with gravel. Then, on Saturday, October 16, Henrie and I headed back to Florida. Meanwhile, back home, I contacted Greg Taylor of Design Plastics in Pompano Beach, about designing a large plastic logo, about 7-1/2 feet in diameter, something that I had in mind to place on the upper facade of our church. We agreed on a design and Greg promised he would have the layout completed in a few days, at which time he could also give me a price. Some time later I also had Design Plastics construct our subsidiary signs, the large wooden planks now below the logo that boldly proclaim to the world:

The Winning of The West
The White Man's Prototype For the Winning of the World

Then on Saturday, November 13, Henrie and I left for our two-week time-sharing stay at our Hawk's Nest apartment in the Keys. On the way down I stopped at Oswald Ozon's place in Southwest Miami (he is the artist that did the front cover for Salubrious Living) and picked up three different renditions I had asked him to do for the masthead of Racial Loyalty, the paper I was contemplating in publishing once we got settled in North Carolina next year.

While at Hawk's Nest I read "Goodbye, Chicago", and started writing two articles that were later published in Racial Loyalty, namely, "Not Likely a Who", and "Point of No Return." Then on Thursday we went back to Pompano Beach to attend a Seminar that Compugraphic was holding at the Holiday Inn, displaying their line of typesetting equipment. While at home I took care of an accumulation of mail, a number of payment books, and also checked the progress of Design Plastics on our large sign.

Then back to Hawk's Nest again. On Sunday Bill and Mary Wimmer came to visit us and stayed at the apartment with us for two days. On Monday we all drove to Key West, where we had lunch at the Pier House and also visited the renewed Audubon House. During the next few days I wrote "God and Country, The Flag and the Constitution, not the Issue nor the Solution", and also "We Will Not Compromise", and "Come out of the Closet, White Man."

Henrie and I had Thanksgiving dinner at the Holiday Inn, Key Colony, just east of Marathon. Then on Saturday we left and returned to Lighthouse Point.

On December 4 I talked to Billy Sanders again, and he said the building had its electrical inspection and had passed, and for all practical purposes was now finished. We will leave the story here, but only to mention that changes, additions and subtractions to the church building would continue indefinitely. Whereas the building was now useable and livable, it was far from final, and its needs continued. I would say that by the time we started publishing Racial Loyalty the following May, what with the changes and additions made during construction, the excavating and grading, the landscaping, putting in the well and the pump, laying the carpeting, installing the typesetting equipment and other office fixtures, I had spent well over $200,000 on the project. But I felt it was well worth it to now start on the long road of saving and rehabilitating Nature's Finest. I still feel the same way today, more than ever.

Against the Evil Tide - 62

Milestone Sixty-One: Building the World Center of the Church of the Creator

1982

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Against the Evil Tide - 63

Milestone Sixty-Two: Trip to Texas and Colorado

April, 1982

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During the construction of the church building, Henrie and I decided to take a diversionary trip out west, as mentioned in the previous chapter. There were several events during this trip that are memorable, yet the story would have been too long and too distracting to have included it with that of building the World Center. Be that as it may. It was spring, and Kim and Walt, who now lived in Colorado Springs, had invited us to come out and see them. On April 3, after going to the Lighthouse Point Post Office and picking up five Pines 'n Palms Ranches payment books, and one COTC donation, I went to the office and recorded and processed same. At noon, we were off and running on our way up the Sunshine Parkway. We made our usual stop at the Holiday Inn Restaurant in Fort Pierce and had our usual lunch of a shrimp salad sandwich, soup, and I had my desert of one of their excellent peach cobblers with ice cream. Although we had started at noon, we drove all the way to Tallahassee, a total of 450 miles, and checked in at the Quality Inn west of town for the night.

We left at eight the next morning, and as we crossed the Alabama border, then the Louisiana border during the day, we picked up travel literature at both welcome stations. We checked in at the Best Western International on the west side of New Orleans for the night, arriving there early, 4 P.M.

The next day we drove across the Mississippi on the River Road to visit the old and historic Houmas Plantation House, which, by the way, was the setting where the film "Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte" was shot. After having a good seafood lunch at Lafitte's Restaurant (named after the pirate) we then drove on along the River Road towards Baton Rouge and visited the Nottaway Plantation House, one of the South's largest antebellum homes. At 5:30 we were on our way west on 1-10 again, and several hours later we decided to pull in at Lafayette, Louisiana for the night. Although there were two Holiday Inns here, both were full, as was practically every other motel in town. After much maneuvering, we finally found a room at the Acadia Village Inn, off the beaten track and about ten miles north of 1-10.

Proceeding west the next day, we stopped at the Texas border Welcome Station to pick up more travel literature. They had a bundle, especially a good book that covered all of Texas, the best of any I have ever seen for any state. While at the counter I asked one of the charming Texas gals if there was anything to commemorate the Battle of San Jacinto, where Sam Houston whipped Santa Ana in 1836. Oh yes, she replied, the San Jacinto Battlefield Park is quite famous in Texas. In fact, it boasts of an obelisk and monument in honor of Sam Houston that is very similar to the Washington Monument, only it is about 15 feet higher, achieving a total of 570 feet. This was exciting news, this I've got to see, I thought as I wondered why I had never heard of it before. Could it be there was an ongoing conspiracy of silence to cover up our historical victory over the Mestizo Mexicans when our pioneering forefathers conquered Texas and most of our Western territories?

We hurried on and soon arrived at the park. Sure enough, there was this huge monument which could be seen from miles away even before we got there. Not only was the monument there, but at its grand base was a museum that housed many an interesting memento of that historic battle. At the very top of the obelisk was the huge five-pointed Lone Star of Texas, cast in solid concrete. Also in the park was the WWII Battleship Texas, anchored in a bayou. All this was an unexpected find indeed. After having lunch at a Denny's Restaurant west of Houston, we drove on to Austin, Texas, and checked in at a Ramada Inn for the night.

The first place in Austin I tried to check out was the American Atheist Center headed by Madeleine Murray O Hare. However, for some reason the place was closed. A high cyclone fence protected the premises from the street. A large billboard at the sidewalk's edge espoused some atheistic quotation by some famous figure in history. Smeared in red paint across the sign was some filthy graffiti by some vandal. I was disappointed that I was not able to meet with and talk to some one in the center. Next we visited the Texas State Capitol Building. It was very impressive and reflected much of Texas' interesting and colorful history.

From there we drove to the College of Life Science, then located at 2007 Whitestone. There I was fortunate enough to meet and have an interesting visit with T. C. Fry, the mainspring of the organization. I noticed he had a copy of NER and also the WMB on his shelf. I had brought along a copy of our latest book, Salubrious Living, which I handed him, and reminded him that much of the material in the book originated from him and his organization. We talked about the possibilities of opening up a Health Center on our grounds near the church. He was very cooperative and said that he could supply us with some candidates to run the place.

We left Austin at 3 P.M. and drove west into the delightful Texas Hill Country. The time of year was just right, and many of its colorful wild flowers along the roadside were in full bloom at this time. The Texas bluebonnets, Indian paint brushes and primroses were very much in evidence, sometimes stretching for miles along the roadside. Our first stop was at Johnson City to visit the former president's LBJ Center. Now being a National Park, the grounds were well kept and the museum itself contained many interesting artifacts and souvenirs that are the legacy of Lyndon Johnson.

From there we drove to the colorful city of Fredericksburg, founded by a group of German settlers in 1846, and named after Prince Friedrich of Prussia. This Hill Country town of 6000 still reflects the quintessence of its earliest settlers and its frontier origins. In the early days, most of the German settlers lived on their farms, but on weekends they would load their wagons with their entire family and products to sell and barter and go into town. After a while many of them built tiny cabins in town, usually one and a half story, where they would spend the whole weekend. These they called Sunday houses. There are still a few of these in existence. When we arrived in Fredericksburg, we checked in at the Sunday House Motel. Fredericksburg is also famous for being the home of Admiral Charles H. Nimitz, and also his ancestors before him, the latter having owned the Steamboat Hotel there since the late nineteenth century. After Nimitz retired from the battles of WWII he built a ship like superstructure onto the hotel, where he lived. The hotel has been restored and the whole complex is now a State Historical Park and houses the Museum of the Pacific War. Because of Admiral Nimitz's respect and friendship for their national hero, Admiral Heihachiro Togo, and Nimitz's kindness to them after the war, the people of Japan raised the money and sent a team of experts to design and build the Garden of Peace behind the Steamboat Hotel. Its simplicity and its classic design make it one of the finest Japanese gardens in the United States.

Before leaving Fredericksburg, I stopped in at the public library and museum, where I bought a copy of Walter Prescott Webb's classic book on

The Texas Rangers. The library is housed in what was originally the second Gillespie County Courthouse, a real classic and a stately old building out of limestone blocks that had come from quarries close to town.

We drove on to Amarillo, Texas, a distance of 456 miles, and after an overnight stay, on to Raton, New Mexico, where we had lunch. Then on to Kim and Walt's house in Colorado Springs, arriving there at 4:30 P.M. on Friday, April 9. Walt was in his first year as a doctor of Chiropracty and was an associate of another chiropractor by the name of Dr. Graham. Kim and Walt had bought themselves a nice house of their own at 5175 Old Farm Circle West in Colorado Springs.

The next morning I drove my two grandsons, Scott and Bryan, who were seven and four, respectively, to the village park, where they participated in an Easter egg hunt. That night Henrie, Kim and Walt and I went out to have an elegant dinner at an exclusive restaurant, the Sunbird, located on the top of some high hill overlooking the city. The next day was Easter, and Henrie and the rest of the family went to the Mormon Church for services, but I stayed home. I made a call to Billy Sanders, the contractor. The basement walls were up, he said, but they had not made much progress because of rains.

The following Tuesday Walt had the day off and while Henrie stayed home, the rest of us took off on a trip to that historic old gold mining town of Cripple Creek, Colorado. The burros were still roaming the streets as usual, and we had a good time rummaging through some of the interesting old places. While there I bought a bronze Western statuette of a cowboy on horseback at an antique shop called Ginny's. The statue is still in our church library at present.

The next day Kim took Henrie and me to the office, where we met Dr. Graham and his wife Barbara, and also his secretary, Georgia. Then the whole group had lunch at Guiseppe's restaurant, located in the old Colorado Springs railroad station, now reconverted.

The next day, while Kim and Henrie went sightseeing in a section called Old Colorado City, I went to see the Professional Rodeo Cowboy's Museum just off I-25. Then I went across the street to a western store and bought a few western knickknacks such as bandanas and tie clips. That evening Scott and Bryan took us all to the Trail Dust Restaurant, a fun place with slides and western music and decor. We all had a good dinner and a lot of fun. Even grandma and grandpa slid down the slides with the boys. The next weekend Walt took Friday off and we all drove to Pagosa, Colorado, where Kim and Walt say they plan to retire and where they own two pieces of property in this large and new real estate development. Walt left earlier and drove down in his Toyota truck, and the rest of us followed a little later in my station wagon, arriving there at 4:30 P.M. After checking in at the Pagosa Inn, we all had a good dinner in its Great Divide dining room.

The next day, after Walt and the boys and I had climbed the lockout tower to observe the surrounding scenery, we drove around the development to look at Kim and Walt's four-acre residential lot and also their half-acre commercial lot. Walt told me that Eaton International, who had built the development, was in financial trouble, and was being taken over by General Electric, who had a mortgage on the property.

Next morning, after having breakfast with the family in the Great Divide dining room and after taking a number of pictures of each other, we said goodbye, and at 11:30 Henrie and I left, heading for Ouray, Colorado, the "Switzerland of America as they like to advertise themselves. We checked in at the Ouray Chalet Motel, owned by a young German couple by the name of Joe and Ann Slawitschka, whom we had known ever since we started coming to Ouray in 1969. However, Joe and Ann were not on the premises. We found out that they now wintered in Boca Raton, Florida, where they had a home and also a card and gift shop. They would, however, soon be back in Ouray for the summer.

We drove to Ridgway, ten miles north, the next morning and had breakfast at the Sunset Restaurant. It was here, at the doorway between the restaurant and the gift shop that I saw an extended horizontal beam over the door that gave me the idea of having a similar extended beam at he top of our church building facade. After breakfast we drove to our "ranch" property a mile north of Ridgway, the 29 acres still left from the 160 acres we originally had bought in 1972. The view of the San Juan Mountains still seemed as impressive as ever, If not more so.

We drove on to Montrose, then took Highway 50 west to Gunnison, where we stopped for lunch at the very picturesque Stockman's Hotel and Restaurant. We finally wound up at the Holiday Inn at Goodland, Kansas, for the night after driving a distance of 453 miles for the day. The next day we drove a total of 587 miles to Sloan Springs, Arkansas, where we checked in at the Sunset Motel late that night. After a poor breakfast we drove on to Eureka Springs and explored the grand and famous old (1886) Crescent Hotel high up on the hillside. The dining room there looked so inviting we had ourselves a second breakfast. Then we drove over to the Gerald L. K. Smith Center and looked at the very impressive outdoor stage where the Passion Plays are held each year. We also visited the G.L.K. Smith Museum and viewed the huge Christ of the Ozarks Statue, taking a number of pictures of it all.

From there we drove to Harrison, Arkansas, where I visited with Kurt Saxon at his home. Kurt is renowned, or was at the time, for his survivalist literature and promotion, even having been on the Phil Donahue show regarding that subject. We talked for about two hours. I had corresponded with him for some time previously. He gave me a mass of his literature, and I gave him a copy of Salubrious Living. He already had copies of my two other books.

After leaving Kurt, we headed for our cabin in North Carolina, arriving there at 9:40 at night two days later, on Thursday, April 22. We had been on the road a long time and had traveled a total of 5024 miles since we left Lighthouse Point on April 3.

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Milestone Sixty-Three: Putting Together the First Edition of Racial Loyalty
1983

The idea of publishing a racially oriented newspaper goes back to the days of promoting the Nationalist White Party in 1971, when I first put out a four-page tabloid with the masthead of Racial Loyalty, and that, only one time. The name Racial Loyalty seemed a natural to me, since that in essence was what we were promoting, and still are. Now, in 1982, as I was planning the construction of the World Center for the Church of the Creator, publishing a church newspaper was an obvious priority in the promotion and expansion of our religious creed and of our movement.

In the fall of 1982, I began to seriously look into various kinds of typesetting equipment we would need in order to do a professional job of putting out a paper. All indicators at that time seemed to point to Compugraphic as being the leading producer of this kind of equipment, and in investigating a little further, I found they had a representative in Broward County. His name was Art Rogers, and he worked out of his home in Coral Springs. On November 10, I called him up for an appointment, and he came over to the house the next day to brief me on their line of equipment and left me some of their literature. Unfortunately, he was new in the business, and he himself did not know too much about the merchandise he was trying to sell. He did not actually have any of their machines for my examination, but he said that next week the company brass was holding a seminar at a Holiday Inn in Ft. Lauderdale, at which time they would have a display of a complete line of their equipment, and the executives there would be able to answer any of my questions. The timing happened to be one of the two weeks Henrie and I were planning to spend at Hawk's Nest, our time-sharing apartment in the Keys, but I told him I would make a special trip back to Ft. Lauderdale to look over their equipment. This I did, as I mentioned in a previous chapter. On December 2 I again met with Art Rogers at my house and wrote up a tentative contract for the purchase of three major pieces of equipment, an MCS computer complete with screen and keyboard, a Zebra 1400 Processor, and a Model 8204 Typesetter and Printer, the latter a real heavy monster. The total price would come to $22,000, but they would give me an allowance of $4000 on the AM typesetting dinosaur I had used for typesetting the WMB, and which I still had at my home in Lighthouse Point. Art Rogers assured me they could make delivery on all of the new equipment before the end of the year.

On the basis of Art Rogers' assurance of delivery before the first of the year, I made preparations to start putting the paper together and start publishing in January of 1983. That same day, December 2, I received a call from Tim Gaffney. I discussed the typesetting equipment deal and its projected arrival before the end of the year. He said that he was ready to come down to our Center to start working, and agreed to be there by December 28th or 29th. I had liked the type style used in the printing of Salubrious Living and wanted to duplicate it in the new set-up we were getting. I called up Jorge Diaz in South Miami to find out the name of the type style, and he advised me it was called Souvenir. The next day, December 4, I had Art Rogers come over again and we concluded the contract, making Souvenir our selected type style.

On December 16, I had an Allied Van Lines truck pick up all the office furniture I still had in place at Jim Hundley's office and warehouse and transport it to our new Church building in North Carolina. Two days later, at 5:30 P.M., Henrie and I had the station wagon loaded and took off for North Carolina. We drove 245 miles that evening as far as Wildwood and checked in at the Holiday Inn. The next day, after having a steak dinner at the Heart of Rabun Restaurant in Clayton, we finally arrived at the cabin at 8 P.M., Sunday, December 19. The Allied Van and office furniture arrived three days later.

Henrie prepared a delicious turkey dinner for Christmas Day, which we spent by ourselves. The same day I called up Art Rogers and inquired about the arrival of the typesetting equipment. I reminded him the typesetting instructor was scheduled to be here on January 3. He again assured me it would be shipped any day now. At 3:30 in the afternoon of Wednesday, December 28, Tim Gaffney arrived. We put him up at the cabin temporarily. His furniture and household effects arrived the next day. He said his wife would follow in about a month or so. I again called Art Rogers. Delivery date of equipment still up in the air.

On the morning of Friday, December 31, Tim and I went into Franklin and bought 15 treated 4x4 fence posts for a picket fence we were planning to build in front of the church. That same afternoon Billy Sanders with the aid of a helper and Tim Gaffney put up the large plastic "W" sign on the upper front facade of the church. That same night we had Tim over for a delicious stew dinner Henrie had prepared.

With the start of the New Year, I got the rest of the lumber together and showed Tim how to build the picket fence in front of the church. Meanwhile, I kept calling Art Rogers and Compugraphic about the delivery of their equipment, but all I got were alibis and promises. Tim kept calling his wife, but he too, was having little success. Evidently her priest was advising her not to come here. On January 11, Henrie and I left for Florida again to take care of matters that needed attention there, one of which was getting our house sold.

All the while, I kept in contact with Tim, who was working himself up into a state of frustration. Without the typesetting equipment, we couldn't get started on the paper, and at the same time his wife was becoming more and more adamant about not leaving New York. On January 23 he called me and said, much to his regret, he had decided to resign. Poor fellow, I couldn't really blame him. Henrie and I both liked him very much.

To add to my problems, I had received a notice from Swain Insurance that they would not extend the coverage on the church beyond January 31. Evidently the Jews and the ADL had gotten to them. I contacted John Horton in Pompano Beach, whom I had known for many years and who had an insurance agency a few doors down from where I used to have my real estate office. He considered the situation, then called an old friend of his in Asheville, North Carolina, by the name of Don Tomberlin, who had a large insurance agency. Over the phone John placed an insurance binder on the church. Furthermore, I cancelled my insurance on the cabin that I had with Swain for many years and placed it with Don Tomberlin also.

After settling the design for the plank signs (THE WINNING OF THE WEST, etc.) with Design Plastics, I picked up the plastic letters (THE CHURCH OF THE CREATOR), to be placed around the upper perimeter of our logo. Then Henrie and I again left for North Carolina, arriving at the cabin at 3:30 P.M. on January 30. The next day I went into Asheville and met with Don Tomberlin and concluded the insurance contract for

$130,000 coverage on the church building and $85,000 on the books and furnishings.

Since Tim Gaffney had decided to leave I was searching for another assistant, and put in a call to Richard Becker, who resided at Greensboro, North Carolina and asked him to come down for an interview. He arrived a few days later, February 5, along with a friend and a dog. The interview lasted most of the day, and he left that evening, just as it began to snow. He agreed to start on March 1, with the title of Hasta Primus (Latin for Spearhead) I had arbitrarily invented for that position.

After helping Tim build the rest of the picket fence and taking care of a number of other details, Henrie and I again left for Florida, arriving home on February 9.

On February 26, we were back at the cabin again. Tim Gaffney had already sent his furniture back by moving van the day before. The next day after we arrived, after having breakfast with us at the cabin, we all exchanged some sad goodbyes and at 9:30 Tim left for Schenectady, New York.

At about this time I got word from Richard Becker, that he had changed his mind and would not be coming. I started searching for a Hasta Primus again. Recently I had read a small book by a certain D.A. (Duke) McCoy about how to organize a right-wing movement, or something to that effect. Reasoning that such a fellow should be a good candidate for the Job, I tracked him down in Rossville, Georgia, and called him on the phone. On Sunday, February 27, I met him and his blonde wife at their home on the outskirts of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and we discussed the situation for the next five hours. He agreed to come visit at our Center the following Saturday. He and his wife and dog duly arrived at 12 noon and settled in for an overnight stay at the cabin with us. I showed him around the premises of the church and went into more detail about what the job would require, the main objective being to publish the paper, Racial Loyalty, on a monthly basis. He seemed to raise all kinds of objections and impossible demands and conditions. It didn't take me very long to come to the conclusion that I didn't want this fellow under any conditions. The next morning I sent him packing. Back to square one.

On the next Tuesday, March 8, late in the afternoon, a huge van from Global Van Lines arrived, and with it six large boxed packages containing our typesetting equipment from Compugraphic. Evidently part of the reason it had been so long delayed was that someone had screwed up and first sent it to South Boston, and it took a few weeks to straighten out that mess. Anyway, now finally it was here! The van was so huge they could not drive it through the gate to the front of the church, so they parked it by the side of the road, outside the gate, and used a dolly to roll the packages across the yard from there, then carried them up the stairs to the upper floor. It took three men until 10:30 that night to do the job, and by that time, of course, it was very dark.

When it came time to leave, the driver found that he did not have maneuvering room to turn that huge behemoth around. I had told him earlier that there was space, a sort of crossroads. If he drove up to my cabin in order to turn around. As luck would have it, in the darkness he tried to turn around about a hundred yards before he got to the crossroads, ran into a ditch and broke down Ayers' cow pasture fence. At about 11:30 that night a very agitated driver knocked on my cabin door and informed me of his dilemma: he was stuck.

I called a wrecking service. They said they would be out, but wait till morning. At 7:30 next morning Ron Slagle's wrecking truck was on the scene to pull Global out of their mess. This cost the latter an extra one hundred dollars. That afternoon Blue Ridge Trucking Service delivered two more packages from Compugraphic. Next I called Compugraphic and told them we now had the equipment, and we now needed their specialist to come out, to unpack, set up, connect and test the equipment. On March 15, Robert Yasi arrived and serviced the equipment. However, we still needed the software for the printer.

So now we had the typesetting equipment, but no typist. Richard Becker had recommended a Nazi friend of his by the name of Tyler Thompson, also from Greensboro, North Carolina. Tyler had written a fairly intelligent letter to the editor that impressed me, and on the basis of that letter and Becker's recommendation I asked him to come down for an interview. After asking me to send him his bus fare, he did in fact arrive on March 12. We discussed terms, duties, etc. He seemed intelligent enough, but there appeared to be two negatives: it seemed he had a drinking problem, and he appeared to be very much on the defensive. Anyway, having few alternate candidates to choose from, I was ready to take him on, and he agreed to start in two weeks. On March 16, Henrie and I left to return to Florida again.

Back in Florida I sent a typed contract to Tyler Thompson to tie down our verbal agreement. He replied that the agreement was fine, but he didn't have any decent clothes to wear on the job, and he would need at least $200 to outfit himself, and for bus fare. I didn't like it, but like the good (naive) chump I was, I sent him the requested $200. He said he would be in Franklin at the bus station on April 4.

The four large plank signs were now completed. I picked them up from Design Plastics and strapped them to the carrier on the roof of my station wagon. On Good Friday, April 1, with Henrie driving my station wagon and me taking the VW Rabbit, we again took off for North Carolina. We had our usual lunch of shrimp sandwiches and soup at the Holiday Inn at Fort Pierce, then after driving 430 miles, we stopped at Moultrie/Adel, Georgia, and tried to get a room. However, it being Good Friday, none was available. We drove on to Tifton and had dinner at the Holiday Inn. We tried to get a room there, but no luck. In fact, the clerk at the desk informed us that she doubted that any were now available up and down the line. By this time it was near midnight and prospects of getting a room anywhere were pretty dim. We drove to the rest area on 1-475 By-pass and parked both cars and rested, taking a semi-snooze from 12 midnight to 1:30 A.M. Then we drove on, tired as we were, until we arrived at the cabin at 6 in the morning.

After a few hours sleep, I received a call from Tim Gaffney, asking for prices on cartons of NER and WMB. That afternoon I also received a call from Tyler Thompson, saying that he would not be coming, he had a bad back. What about the $200? Well, sorry, he had already spent it. Later I found out as to how he had spent it. He had gone on one big drunk until he was flat. So much for good faith in human nature.

That night I called Tim Gaffney again. Earlier he had mentioned William J. Tucker, a former boss of his and a partner in his Force and Order group, who he felt would be a good prospect for the Hasta Primus job. Tim gave me his telephone number and I called Bill Tucker. He seemed receptive and agreed to come here to discuss the situation. On Monday, April 4, Gene Schwelgert, from Compugraphic, arrived to give Henrie and me three days of instruction in the operation of the new typesetting equipment we had purchased, said instruction being part and parcel of the deal. I had hoped that by now we would have had our key typist here to also get the benefit of that instruction, but since none had materialized, Henrie, who was a typist, and myself, who was not, took the instruction. Shortly thereafter Bill Tucker called and informed me they would be here Saturday, April 9, and sure enough, at 11:20 A.M. Bill and his wife Arlene and their dog arrived at the cabin. I showed them the territory, discussed the terms, treated them to lunch and then to dinner. I detected that the wife was the dominant figure in the equation and that she was not too eager to make the move. At 7:10, after dinner, they left. In follow up, nothing came of that encounter either, although he called back and promised he would be with me in six months.

I went to work in my garage workshop and constructed a table for the computer and keyboard, a lowboy on which to put the heavy 8402 Printer, and a stand and cabinet on which to place the Zebra developer. I also built a slanting paste-up table on which to cut, lay out, and paste up the copy. I also bought an electric waxer and ordered layout sheets. Henrie and I decided we would wait no longer and that we would put the first edition together ourselves. She would do the typesetting, and I would do the writing, the cutting, the layout and the pasting. On April 12 she started typesetting on the first article, Creativity, an Idea Whose Time Has Come.

There was no lack of material or articles. For the last year or so I had been writing a number of articles as the spirit moved me and filing them away for future reference. While at Hawk's Nest In the Keys last November, I wrote "Not Likely a Who'", "Point of No Return", "God and Country, The Flag and The Constitution" and "We Will Not Compromise." Also, a few days later I wrote "Come Out of the Closet, White Man." On January 1, 1983, I wrote "Building a Whiter and Brighter World." In February I wrote the essay on "Racial Teamwork", and soon thereafter "The Flat Tire Syndrome" and "Russia, Israel and the United States." When the time came to put together the first edition, I had really intended to only put out an eight-page tabloid each month, but when I got to it I found that even 12 pages were hardly enough to say all I wanted to say.

With Henrie doing the typesetting and me doing the cutting and the pasting, by April 24 we had the six double sheets, the 12 pages, put together and ready for the printer. We designated it as Issue No. 1, June, 1983. The next day I took the copy to Dixie Advertising in Franklin and gave Gene Dowdle a check in the amount of $921.86 to print 15 thousand copies. That same day, at 1 P.M., Henrie and I left the cabin and returned to Florida to take care of a number of urgent matters.

Back in Lighthouse Point, I called Gene Dowdle. He confirmed that all 15 thousand had been successfully run and were ready to be picked up. I asked him to mall me three copies for examination, which he did. I was well pleased with our first production.

After picking up 1000 large manila envelopes at Broward Stationers and the same number of form letters from the printers, and loaded up with other supplies, Henrie and I again left for North Carolina on May 6. Meanwhile, I had been in contact with Richard Becker, and he had changed his mind and had decided to take the job at the church. He arrived at 10:15 A.M. on May 8, and I moved him and his belongings into the upstairs apartment at the church. The next morning Richard and I went in to Franklin, had breakfast at the B & D Restaurant and picked up the 15 thousand copies of Racial Loyalty at Dixie Advertising. The same day Becker and I shipped out 21 cartons of 100 copies each of RL. The next day we shipped out another 51 cartons of 100 each. During the next several days we mailed out several hundred individual copies to people who were not subscribers, but were on our mailing list, a total of 645.

On May 16, I had Billy Sanders put up the large plank signs on the upper facade of the church, "The Winning of the West." At the same time I taught Richard Becker the fundamentals of what I knew about the mechanics and techniques of using the typesetting equipment. Then on May 18 Henrie and I left for Florida again.

We had been shuttling back and forth between Florida and North Carolina repeatedly, with a great deal of wear and tear, as the foregoing narrative has illustrated. This was soon to come to an end, as I will relate in the next and final chapter.

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Milestone Sixty-Three: Putting Together the First Edition of Racial Loyalty
1983

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Milestone Sixty-Four: Leaving Florida for North Carolina

June, 1983

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From the time that I decided I would build the World Center in North Carolina I also came to the realization that Henrie and I would have to sell our house in Lighthouse Point and make a total move to be close to the church. Although both of us loved the location of our cabin under the seven oaks and the beautiful mountain views that went with it, nevertheless, at our age, the uprooting and the arduous task of making the move was something neither of us relished. After all, we had lived there in a spacious, comfortable home, complete with swimming pool and a boat dock, for twenty-four years, the longest period of time either one of us had ever lived in any one domicile, and furthermore, there were many memorable highlights and events in our lives that were irrevocably intertwined with our residing there. However, we bit the bullet, and realized that if I was to ever get the movement into orbit, the move had to be made, and it was now or never.

On October 26, 1982, I first contacted a real estate agent to put the house on the market. His name was Frank Giletka, who worked out of the office of Merill Lynch Realty, a division of the stock brokerage firm in Pompano Beach. He came over to inspect the property, and three days later we got together again and I signed a six months' listing with his firm. It was a good selection, as Frank seemed to be an eager beaver to sell our house in particular. Unfortunately, it was not the best of times to sell real estate, since in 1982 the country was in a recession, and the real estate market was in a slump. However, we had a choice location, and Frank Giletka worked arduously at making this sale, and showed it a number of times, even when Henrie and I were not there but shuttling back and forth to North Carolina. After a few months down the line, it seems he somehow got into a hassle with his superiors, and Frank parted company with Merrill Lynch, with the listing remaining in the hands of the brokerage firm. Two lady brokers continued showing the house.

Meanwhile, Frank joined another brokerage firm by the name of Joseph S. Balestreri, also in Pompano Beach. When the listing term of six months ran out, Frank was back to relist the property with Balestreri. Although Merrill Lynch also vied for it, I chose to give it to Frank, and within another two months one of his associates, Ellen Barnes, had a solid prospect and offer. As luck would have it, when we received the offer, it was by telephone while we were at our cabin in North Carolina. The offer was considerably below the price we had asked, and I rejected it out of hand, asking $20,000 more, take it or leave it. After some haggling back and forth, the buyers decided to take it. On May 20 we were back in Pompano Beach and got together with the broker to put the finishing touches on the agreement and signed a Deposit Receipt Contract, which had an original date of May 12. It was a cash deal, and among other things, stipulated we would vacate the premises before July 1.

On June 3 we again left for North Carolina to start putting together the second edition of Racial Loyalty. While there, on June the 9th I had two reporters from the Atlanta Journal/Constitution, Marke C. Winne, and Bill Montgomery, visit me. It seems that J. B. Stoner, of the National States Rights Party, and of the Thunderbolt, had at this time been convicted of a church bombing in Alabama that happened some 15 or 20 years earlier. It was a phony and rigged trial, pursued by some eager beaver nigger District Attorney, eager to make a name for himself, aided and abetted by the ADL. Somehow, after all these years, they managed to rig the trial, convinced the jury and make it stick. Now Stoner was on the lam, and no one knew where he was. These reporters were convinced he was hiding out at our church, and that I was involved in a conspiracy of harboring a criminal fleeing from the law.

After some argument in which I made it abundantly clear I didn't know what in the hell they were talking about, they finally left, and walked as far as the gate, where their car was parked. There they stopped to consult between themselves. Then they came back to make another try at it. By this time I was getting somewhat aggravated and told them the same thing as I had told them before, only in stronger terms. Finally they left, and I was not to see either one of them again, until about nine months later, when on March 8, 1984, Mark C. Winne was back to make a television documentary about our church for WXIA in Atlanta.

Meanwhile, the next day, June 10, I finished putting the second issue of Racial Loyalty (July) together and took it to Dixie Advertising in Franklin to have 5000 copies run at a price of $655.38. The next day Henrie and I left for Lighthouse Point again, and for the last time. As soon as we arrived we started the arduous task of getting our endless collection of belongings, the valuable and the useless, packed for the big move. It was a job at which Henrie cringed, and I couldn't think of anything I detested more.

A few days later, at 10 o'clock on the morning of June 15 I called up Rick Becker to find out how he was coming along in packaging the mailing of the July Issue. He was in a real dither and there was great excitement in his voice. He had tried to call me in the middle of the night, he said, but my phone had repeatedly responded with a busy signal. (In checking further, it had been improperly on the hook.) He related to me that at 2:30 that morning some criminals had tried to firebomb the church, and had fired a double 00 shotgun blast at our logo, leaving a number of holes in it. He had called Mayday! Mayday! on the 911 line and two fire departments had arrived in short order to put out the fire, one brigade from Otto, and the other from Dillard. Bob Scott, from the Asheville Citizen, and Kim Kimmins, from the Franklin Press, had already been there to take pictures and write their story. Later, I received a call from Bob Scott, who wanted further information.

Wow! I thought, this is really getting down to naked terrorism. I called the Macon Sheriff's department to find out if they had any idea who the culprits might be. No, they had no idea, they said. I informed the deputy I was talking to that I had been told the culprits had left some empty beer cans by the side of the road. Why didn't they check t these out for fingerprints? The deputy gave me some lame brained excuse why this was impossible. Actually, they were lying about not knowing who the culprits were. Just about everybody else in Macon County seemed to know. We suspected that it was either some group of fanatic born-again Christian zealots, or the Jewish ADL. Later information seemed to indicate that we were right on both counts, and some fiery preacher had goaded some youthful idiots into making the attack, and that behind him was the ADL.

Meanwhile, back at the house, we were selling what furniture and appliances we could and packing the rest of the items in a multitude of boxes and cardboard wardrobes. On June 23, Allied Vans dissembled and packed our white grand piano, which we were shipping as a gift to Kim and Walt in Loveland, Colorado. On June 24 we met at the office of attorney Hunter B. Craig and closed the real estate transaction for the sale of our Lighthouse Point home. On the morning of June 28 we were all packed and I called Allied Van Lines to determine what time they would be here to pick up and start loading. I had made arrangements with one of their agents about three weeks earlier to pick up our load on June 28. Unfortunately, shortly thereafter that agent had gone on vacation and had neglected to make the reservation. Now when I called, the office informed me they had no information about our case, and they had no vans immediately available. I raised hell about their boondoggle, and by 11 A.M. they had a van at our house. It was an emergency van they had rented from another company, but nevertheless, by 4 P.M. they were loaded and on their way. When I checked about the price, they informed us that they were charging us an extra $400 for the emergency rental. After a big hassle with them, I settled for something less.

After they left, we swept up and cleaned up the empty house, Henrie being meticulous about it to a fault. We finally left the house at 9:15 P.M. our own station wagon loaded to the gills with our choice oil paintings and other valuables. We checked in at the Holiday Inn at Ft. Pierce about an hour and a half later, and, dead tired after a strenuous day, we went to bed without dinner.

The next day, after a good night's rest and a good breakfast at the Holiday Inn, we drove a total of 505 miles, stopping at McDonough, Georgia. We checked in at the Holiday Inn at 6:45 that evening, and after a good night's rest, left at 8:45 next morning. Arriving at Clayton, Georgia at noon, we had lunch at Burrell's Junction restaurant, then loaded up with groceries. Finally, on Thursday, June 30, at 1:30 P.M. we arrived at the cabin. The Allied van with our furniture arrived exactly a week later, and the move was complete.

It was the end of one era, and the beginning of another, a future that was cloudy and unpredictable. With this move, I had crossed the Rubicon and made the final commitment to the cause, fully aware that what lay ahead was fraught with uncertainty, with unknown hazards, and no guarantees. I was embarking on uncharted seas, waters that were not only full of hidden shoals, but also vicious sharks. However, the future also presented unlimited challenges and rewards. At stake was not only my own insignificant survival, but the rare and golden opportunity to play a major role in the survival, expansion and advancement of Nature's Finest, the White Race. It was the greatest of all challenges imaginable, a challenge that was worth pursuing at any and all costs - no price too high, no sacrifice too great. It is a job that has to be done.

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Milestone Sixty-Four: Leaving Florida for North Carolina

June, 1983

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